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The minister teaches
religion

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION

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FRANK A. LINDHORST

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. —Matt. 9:37-38

READING ROOM
MAR 1 1993
PRINCETON SEMINARY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

THE CHARLES G. REIGNER
MAR 28 1955
EDUCATIONAL READING ROOM
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION

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TO

My Mother and Father

FOREWORD

THE CHURCH has never taken its educational responsibilities seriously enough. Benjamin Kidd pointed out years ago how quickly the world could be captured for Christian ideals if one generation of youth could be won. The Russians and Nazis have shown us what education can accomplish. The church should learn and do.

This book will help the church both to learn and to do. Religious education has been a recognized field for several decades. Yet in all that time no adequate book has appeared to outline the duties of the pastor in carrying out its purposes. Here at long last, as people like to say, is a worthy book in that field.

The Minister Teaches Religion is both human and scientific in its approach, specific in its analyses and instructions, constructive in its tone, deep in its understanding of the pastorate, balanced in its perspective. It is not a one-sided "cultish" treatment which assumes too much for religious education. It reflects a wealth of experience in churches large and small. If it outlines too many things for any pastor to do, let the pastor remember that loyalty to the church can best be engendered in his laymen by placing responsibilities on worthy shoulders.

WILLIAM K. ANDERSON

PREFACE

THE MINISTER teaches religion. He cannot help it. In every contact he makes with persons of any age, the shadow of his personality is cast upon them. From his actions and attitudes they learn something of his outlook upon life, something of his faith—or lack of faith—in God, and something of the purposes for which he is working.

Much of what we learn is acquired in this indirect way, with no definite plans on the part of anyone. "Concomitant learnings," the educator calls them. Thus, we are all teaching others by our attitudes and our outlook upon life. The way we meet difficulties; the way we work out our family relationships; our social contacts; our response to opposition; what we say at the luncheon club; the extent to which we follow the crowd; the degree to which we are able to stand on our own feet—all reveal to others what we consider worth while in life. The minister cannot help but teach religion through these indirect methods.

The minister also teaches religion *intentionally*. That is, he sets out to change persons from what they are to what they ought to be. He may or may not be successful. He must work with people of all ages, in all kinds of situations, and with all types of backgrounds. It is necessary that he *plan* his procedures carefully. In a sense he must "set the stage" to provide the right kind of teaching experiences.

Many ministers are hungry for methods that are sound in purpose, that are sound psychologically, and that are known to produce results. However, most books that have been written

to help ministers guide persons into better living and into an appreciation of God and his world, have stressed the philosophy behind the task, while books dealing with the *how* of Christian educational evangelism have been few. This book is an attempt to meet the need of the clergy for such practical help.

The church needs more of the educational approach in its work. The importance of the teaching ministry has not been sufficiently emphasized. If we are ever to overcome the common belief in the use of might as a means of bringing about change and securing peace, we must make a wider and more effective use of the teacher and his methods. Likewise, we must make sure that in our educational work there is spirit—strong Christian motives and feelings. We need to stress the *whole church* as a teaching agency, not just the Sunday school alone. Beyond that, we need to see the church as a part of the whole kingdom of heaven. Teaching must deal with life and must have as its aim the winning of lives to God and his way.

This is a book of methods—methods that ministers have tested in many situations. It does not attempt to discuss at length the philosophy and principles of Christian educational evangelism, yet back of every method suggested are the principles today recognized as sound. No attempt has been made to cover the whole field. The purpose has been rather to concentrate upon *what the minister himself can do,* and upon the points at which he can take hold in his educational program. The work of the minister has been the chief consideration, but the methods suggested are of value to laymen as well as to ministers.

In the preparation of this book I am indebted to many persons who have influenced my life during the past thirty years. Lotus D. Coffman gave me a first appreciation for the educational method, Walter S. Athearn a first insight into the possibilities and necessity of the educational approach for the church. M. A. Dawber pointed out the need of applying edu-

cational theory to small church practice, and the relationship of the church to the whole community. Harry F. Ward and George A. Coe made it clear that the social implications of the gospel must be given adequate place. W. J. Lowstutter and Albert C. Knudson revealed the significance of the Bible in religious teaching. F. M. Gregg showed that much of the theory could be applied practically. William Clayton Bower made the creative method realistic by guiding me through experiences where it was used. Ernest J. Chave, by severe and accurate criticisms, helped to improve my own methods of working with churches. Henry Wieman made more vivid the use of the educational process as a means of co-operating with God. Hundreds of ministers and thousands of laymen have helped—in conferences, schools, and personal conversations—through these years to make my studies increasingly practical.

In the immediate preparation of this book, a copy was sent to several pastors—some in large churches, some in small—as well as to other church leaders, with the request that they judge it for its practicality. This they have done and have made many helpful suggestions. To these persons, therefore—William K. Anderson, George R. Bell, Charles W. Brashares, Raoul C. Calkins, Warner M. Hubbard, William P. King, Harris Franklin Rall, J. Q. Schisler, J. Fisher Simpson, and Laren Spear—I am especially indebted.

My family has shown a Christian patience with a husband and father who has never been sure how much time he could be at home. I am grateful to my secretary, Miss Marian Wisner, for typing and editing the manuscript.

No attempt has been made to list an exhaustive bibliography, but some books pertaining to the specific questions discussed in each chapter are suggested.

FRANK A. LINDHORST

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CHAPTER I

THE OLD AND THE NEW IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

PRACTICES in teaching have usually followed one of two main approaches. It will help us to keep these two approaches quite well in mind. In most instances they are in contrast to each other, although at many points there are varying degrees of similarity in purpose. No teacher or leader uses either one in its entirety, but present-day teachers emphasize one method more than the other. In the following pages an attempt has been made to show the differences and characteristics of these two approaches:

The old	The new
To change character the teacher fills the pupil's mind with knowledge.	Character is changed by establishing purposes, setting ideals, making choices, and going through experiences which allow the pupil to practice what the teacher wants him to become.
Bible knowledge will make people good.	The Bible is the greatest record of man's religious experience. It is a guide to action and an aid to right living. But knowing it does not alone assure good conduct.
The teacher is the source of wisdom. Because he is the	The teacher is a guide. He helps the pupils find knowl-

The old	The new
teacher, his authority is final. And he is always right.	edge and experiences which aid their growth. Authority comes from tested experience and from the contribution one can make. The teacher may be wrong.
It is the pupil's business to listen and try to remember what he is told. The pupil is considered as knowing little, the teacher much. The teacher decides what should be taught and often teaches what he likes to teach.	It is the pupil's business to search, discover, and evaluate (with the teacher's help). The teacher and pupils are both considered as having some knowledge and experience. The teacher seeks to discover the felt and unfelt needs of the pupil and to guide him through those experiences which will help him meet his needs.
Interest of the pupil is maintained by threatened punishment and promised prizes and rewards.	Interest of the pupil is maintained by leading him to want the information or experience offered and because he enjoys the method of learning that is employed. In other words, the teacher seeks to make learning interesting in itself.
What is taught is organized *logically* and handed out in books or by lecture regardless of its relationship to the pupil's experience.	It is best to consider the psychological point of the pupil's growth and to offer a study when it comes nearest to fitting into his experience.

THE OLD AND THE NEW IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The old	The new
Memory work is given for the "training of the mind" and to "store up" desirable knowledge for future use. It is not essential that it fit the present understanding or situation.	Memory work is given because there is a use for it now or in the near future. It is selected to fit the pupil's understanding, and is related to other studies or activities which he is carrying on.
A given study is discontinued when the time is up, whether or not solutions are reached or plans made to do anything about it.	A study is continued over such periods of time as are needed to complete the experience of searching, acquiring new ideas, making commitments, planning action and carrying it out.
Methods used are telling, reading, writing, memorizing, reciting, questioning and answering.	Methods used include telling, reading, writing, memorizing, reporting, constructing, evaluating, discussing, sharing, creating, interviewing, and any other method which helps the pupil to learn.
The teacher does all the planning and makes all arrangements for a given teaching-learning experience.	The pupils and teacher co-operatively plan in committees and make arrangements for a given experience in teaching and learning.
The pupil has done good work when he can reproduce what the teacher has given to him, orally or in writing.	The pupil has done good work when he can make use of his new discoveries to meet some need in his life or to ful-

The old	The new
	fill at least partially the purpose toward which he set out in the particular study or experience.
"The lesson" is that which is printed on one or more pages of a text, to be dealt with, as a rule, in one sitting or class period.	"The lesson" is the objective for which one is working, plus all that is needed and all that is done to reach that objective. It may take only one sitting or class period, but it is more likely to take several.
Lesson materials for church school purposes are organized for each single session and are not necessarily related to the preceding or succeeding sessions.	Lesson materials are organized in groups of sessions or in "units" of sufficient length to complete the experience. Each session in the unit has a relationship to all the others in the series.
The class session usually begins with a review of the last session or sessions or by reading the biblical text printed in "the quarterly." Frequently the biblical text is then interpreted "verse by verse" and discussed with such leads as "What would you have done?" "What should he have done?" or "Was he justified in doing this?"	The class session may begin in one of many ways, such as continuing the construction work which was begun previously, with reports of discoveries or accomplishments since the last meeting, with supervised study, with seeing and interpreting a picture, with the asking of questions by the pupils, with pupils stating problems or telling what they would like to know. The Bible materials are used as other

The old	The new
	materials are—where they best fit into the procedure of the learning experience. The Bible may be used at the beginning of a session. More often it will be used later.
The personality of the teacher is more likely to be given primary consideration. The right of the teacher over the pupil is often emphasized.	The personalities of all—the pupils and teacher—are held sacred. The right of each pupil and teacher is held in trust by all.
Physical seating arrangement is likely to be with the teacher at the front and pupils in rows facing the teacher.	Seating is more likely to be in a circle or hollow square where each has the "seat of honor" and all face each other. This arrangement promotes the spirit of sharing.

Understanding the two approaches

These two approaches for influencing others—or for teaching—are here classified as "old" and "new" because in the minds and experience of most ministers and other adults the column marked "old" was the method commonly used during their school days. The methods marked "new" have been gradually finding their way into the church and school during the past fifteen to twenty-five years.

In reality, this is not a fair labeling, since Jesus used the method indicated as "new." Consider his teaching experiences with Nicodemus, with the woman at the well, with the rich young ruler, with Peter, John, and the other disciples. He sought the need of his pupil and taught to meet that need.

It is true that there are dangers in both the "old" and the

"new," but the dangers are there because one is dealing with the guidance of personalities, and guiding persons is dangerous business. The "new," however, seeks to discover the needs of the learner, and to meet those needs, making the dangers far less hazardous.

Often the left-hand column is called the "content-centered" approach to teaching," while the right-hand column is called the "pupil-centered," or "life-centered," or "experience-centered" method. It should be noted in passing that the method in the right-hand column really uses the best of the method set forth in the left-hand column and adds to it!

We all tend, however, to take truth which we have *learned through daily living* and attempt to hand it on to others in logical form. We forget that we must help the learner to relate this truth to his *own* experience, and that it will not necessarily mean the same to him as to us. Yet it must be just as truly a part of his experience as it was related to our experience when we learned it. The giver of the Ten Commandments no doubt learned them through his experiences with God and the Israelites. Before they become a genuine part of us and are accepted by us they must be seen in relationship to our own day and experience.

The best teachers of all time have used the pupil-centered method. This has been true whether they were teaching religion or teaching grammar, mathematics, history, or geography. The minister who hopes to lead his congregation in developing Christlike lives will learn more and more how he can apply the methods in the right-hand column to his preaching, to his work with church leaders, to his calling, and to the work of the whole church.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles. —Mark 2:22

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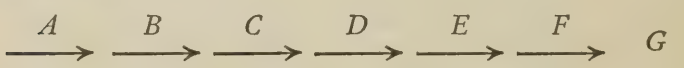
CHAPTER II

OBJECTIVES GROW WITH THE PERSONS

If one is to help a person grow mentally and spiritually he must know the needs of that person. This is basic. For instance, does he have an understanding of prayer? Does he have a clear idea of God so that his prayers are meaningful and beneficial to him? Does he know anything about the content of prayer? What is his belief in prayer and his concept of it? How much does he practice it? *Where he is will determine where the teacher will begin.* It will also determine what some of the immediate goals may be.

Goals are long and short, ultimate and immediate. To reach a certain city you may have to cross many roads and pass through many intermediary cities and towns. It will take you longer to reach the ultimate goals than the immediate or intermediary goals. It is necessary that the ultimate goals be kept in mind in order to direct all efforts toward them. But first you must reach the intermediary goals, or else you cannot reach the ultimate ones.



G is the ultimate goal; *A, B, C, D, E, F* are intermediary goals which you must reach in order to accomplish *G*.

For example, we want a pupil to know his way in the Bible so that he can readily find references in it. This becomes an ultimate Bible goal so far as handling the book is concerned. Before he can do this, however, he must learn where the more

important books are and their relative location in the Bible. This step becomes an intermediary goal.

Again, we wish him ultimately to be a good steward of all he has. The intermediary goals may be to help him understand God as the Creator of all good things, and to know how to budget his time, money, and energies.

Or, we want him to live a Christian life. We must first teach him *what* a Christian life is, how it should be lived at home, in school, and on the playground, how a Christian differs from other people.

So the minister who hopes to teach religion will have in mind both ultimate and intermediary goals for his congregation, for his children, for his official board, and for any other group or person with whom he is working.

We have seen that goals are based on needs. We should now realize that needs change from age to age, and within the age group from year to year, month to month, and day to day. It is important, therefore, that the minister and his teachers *keep in touch* with their pupils.

A change in needs may be due to changes in a person's age, in his surrounding circumstances, or in his own ideas and experiences as a result of good teaching.

While recently visiting a junior department where they were discussing what the Golden Rule means in relation to persons of another race, the writer asked a boy how this would apply to our relationships with American-born Japanese and our actions toward them. He said, after a little thought, "I think it means that we should help them to have a good place to live." His superintendent said that four weeks before the pupil had been hostile toward this racial group, but that his teacher had helped him think differently. So his need four weeks ago was not the same. Good teaching caused the change, and further good teaching must consider this change.

Thus, only in general terms can we say that there are common objectives for all persons. It is true that in some respects

all humanity is alike, but persons vary in their attitudes, ideas, and practices. These variations must be recognized by ministers in helping persons to grow. A minister must know a person's specific differences if he is to be of the greatest help to him.

In general, Christian educators have accepted the seven objectives worked out interdenominationally through the International Council of Religious Education. These are:

1. A knowledge of God which is true to Christian teaching and a growing consciousness of fellowship with this Christlike God.
2. A knowledge and understanding of Jesus which will lead to personal commitment to him, and to his way of life.
3. An attitude toward life which is warmly and positively Christian.
4. A growth in Christlike habits.
5. The ability to live as a Christian in society.
6. The ability to participate actively in the church fellowship.
7. A knowledge of the Bible which is dynamic and which leads to zest for continuous Bible study.

And recently there has been officially added an eighth objective:

8. The establishing and sustaining of Christian families.

Each of these major objectives, when considered in the light of each age group, calls for different specific objectives for each. When we consider these objectives as they pertain to the whole life of the person, we will see that they are progressive from age group to age group, as abilities develop and experiences multiply. To illustrate, let us look at these progressive steps as they concern a person's experience with the Bible, beginning with the nursery child and extending through adulthood. If the minister will carefully study these "growing" objectives it will greatly help him in all of his contacts with the various

ages. He will also become a strong, resourceful person for guiding and helping his church school teachers.

Growing objectives in Bible study

Nursery children (3 years of age).—The Bible has many stories and truths, which, when adapted, apply to children. It was, however, written primarily for adults. The actual Bible material which can be used with the nursery child is extremely limited. For instance, "Baby Moses" becomes a story of "the girl who took care of her baby brother." Nothing of the king's orders to kill babies should be told to nursery children. Christian educators who work with nursery children say there are six stories from the Bible that can be told safely to this group. They are: "Jesus and the Children," "Children Go to See Jesus," "Baby Jesus," "Caring for Baby Jesus," "Jesus and the Birds," "Jesus and the Flowers."

Each of these stories is only a part of a larger story as given in the Scriptures. The pastor should help his nursery teachers to understand this, and thus prevent the mistake of telling the gruesome stories, as thoughtless yet well-meaning teachers sometimes do.

There may be a Bible on a low table in the room, for the children to handle if they wish. Our major objective with the nursery child, however, is to make him happy at church so that he will want to return, to teach him to play with other children in a Christian way, to help him learn to be away from his mother, and to teach him about God's beautiful world.

Kindergarten children (4-5 years old).—At this age Bible teaching is also limited. A few carefully selected and carefully worded stories and a few *short* memory passages are used. A copy of the Bible should be placed on a low table for handling, and the teacher should *hold it open* in her hands when she tells the story "from this book that God has helped us to have." She may use some carefully chosen pictures of Bible incidents.

It is wise to avoid such pictures as angels with wings, Daniel in the lion's den, and others of a similar nature. Suitable pictures would include the Madonna and Child, David caring for his sheep, Jesus and the children. Denominational publishing houses are using much more care than formerly in the selection of pictures they offer to churches for children of this age. Skilled teachers will also provide for informal dramatizations—or "playing the story"—of some of the simple narratives.

Primary children (in the first to third grades).—A larger selection of Bible stories is adaptable to the primary age, but care must be taken here also to avoid the gruesome. For this reason we omit the crucifixion and resurrection stories until the junior department. Longer verses for memory work are recommended. These memory passages should always be related to the story and should be used in worship experiences. Bible pictures are used a great deal, and in the third grade there should be some instruction in using the Bible itself. A worship center should include a Bible, together with a Bible picture *related to the unit of study*. The picture should be changed from unit to unit.

Juniors (boys and girls in the fourth to sixth grades).—We now enter into a period of real Bible study. During these years the boys and girls should learn how the Bible is arranged and how to use it. Since juniors understand historical sequence—which younger children do not—they are ready for the *consecutive* story of the life of Jesus. Something of how we got our Bible should be taught. Memory work should center on longer "unit" passages rather than short verses. For instance, one memory passage for the whole five weeks of a unit is better than five short passages or Golden Texts. Hero stories are popular and effective with juniors. The tragedies, as well as the beautiful portions of the Scripture, can be a part of their study. Picture studies of biblical events and teachings are used.

Implications of the teachings of Jesus for the experiences of juniors are stressed. Juniors will use the Bible a great deal in their department and class worship experiences.

Intermediates (young people in the seventh to ninth grades).—What is taught to this group will depend upon what they learned as juniors. If Bible drill was lacking then, it should be in the program for intermediates. But assuming that the junior years included the normal amount of Bible teaching, the objectives for the intermediate years in Bible study will include the memorization of great passages fitting in with the lesson units studied. There should also be studies of the background, translations, and development of the Scriptures; the people of Bible times; the implications of teachings suitable for the experience of intermediates; and the use of the Bible in worship.

Seniors (young people in the tenth to twelfth grades).—More thorough biblical studies will follow the work of the intermediate years. These will especially stress the Bible and its relationship to scientific teachings, for seniors are rapidly acquiring the scientific point of view. The biblical interpretation of social life should also be included. Some of the less familiar sections may be studied. At this age much attention should be given to the use of the Bible in private devotional life.

We should strive to help these seniors see that the Gospels, which contain the teachings of Jesus, provide for them *the* guide for their conduct, and *the* inspiration for their growing Christian lives.

Young people (above high school) and *adults*.—These age groups should make an intensive study of the Scriptures, becoming familiar with the various translations and comparing the diversified interpretations, and should use the Bible increasingly in devotional practices. Some studies in how to use it in family devotional experiences are also valuable. The comfort in the Bible for persons facing personal tragedies and old

age should be known to all. In other words, there should be an increasing appreciation for the "Book of Books" as one grows from childhood to manhood.

Growing objectives in other areas

Space will not permit a complete analysis of the growing objectives for all the areas of experience. We will try, however, to give a brief survey of them with the understanding that in each area there is very much more that can be said—in fact, enough to challenge one's thinking and study for a lifetime.

One should bear in mind that in the Group Graded and Closely Graded lessons there are units designed to carry pupils through these definite objectives in Bible study and other areas. The minister should have an outline of his denominational curriculum.

In home experiences.—In the nursery the teacher seeks to teach the child to live with other persons his own age and to take care of himself.

In the kindergarten specific home experiences are made the basis for study. The church endeavors to teach responsibility, dependability, and co-operation in home relationships. It is a help to the child at this age to learn to appreciate his home and parents as gifts from God.

In the primary years all of this is continued, with increasing intensity. Jesus' home life is studied to link the child with him. This is also true of the junior and intermediate years. Boys and girls are motivated increasingly to live as Christians in the home.

By the time the senior department is reached young people of this age are beginning to think of marriage and a home. So one of the objectives for this age group is to evaluate friends and companions in the light of Christian teachings, and set up ideals as a basis for choosing friends.

In later youth, this anticipation of marriage and a home is

even stronger and should be given more consideration, with definite study of Christian implications for the home environment and relationships.

With young and middle-aged adults, efforts should be made to help them in their home life, in the guiding of children, and in establishing a Christian way of life.

With older adults help should be given in developing Christian practices as grandparents and parents-in-law. The church program must also include help for the lonely home life of aged persons. Here again the objectives change as a person grows more mature in his experience, and good lesson materials provide the proper units on the home for each age group.

In church experiences.—Here a growing, changing objective also exists. Some attention is given to nursery and older children, but a great deal more to youth and adults. Each step of the way the objective varies to fit the age group.

With nursery children we try to make their church experiences happy ones. Friendly helpers in the nursery department, a bright, cheery room, growing plants and flowers, toys with which to play, and someone near to help when needed, give the child a sense of security while he is there and make him want to return.

Kindergarten children, where a nursery experience has preceded, are ready for much more than those who come as four-year-olds for their first church experiences. Nevertheless, in the two years they are in this preschool group, we will seek to help them find by study, story, play, and other experiences, that the church is a lovely place. Perhaps we can help them get acquainted with some parts of the church and with some of the people who work in it—certainly with the pastor, who will visit the kindergarten department.

Primary children will learn more about the church—the building, its people, and gatherings which are held there. Stories about famous persons in church history will give them the

beginning of an appreciation for those persons and for the church. Perhaps they will make some things for their church.

Juniors are eager to be a part of the church. We will look for opportunities to make them feel so. Something of the history of the church, what the church does for others, the beliefs of church people, a beginning in the study of symbolism, and participation in its public worship services, will be included in the objectives relative to the church. As a climax to their junior years they should become full members of the church. Various communions differ in their concepts of the relationship of the small child to the church. However, by the time the child is twelve years old, all churches should have some plan of officially and publicly relating him to the church.

Intermediates, because of the lack of previous experience, may require what is suggested above for juniors. But beyond that we need to help them understand and appreciate the work of the church. They should be taught its history and introduced to more of its noted leaders. They should become acquainted with the developments which brought about the many denominations and know something of the world-wide mission of the church.

With seniors, young people, and adults the objectives will be to intensify and deepen their appreciation of the church and their relationship to it, so that they become increasingly active in it, carrying their share of the responsibility of making it the medium of service that it should be for them. They should come to feel that the church is a center of spiritual growth and a source of comfort in days of crisis.

At each of these periods of development there should be education in intelligent giving of money to the church.

In teaching about God.—Our objectives will be to give those in each age group a concept of God that they can understand.

In teaching about Jesus.—Our objectives with the nursery child will be to help him learn about Jesus as a good man and to learn about his experiences with children.

OBJECTIVES GROW WITH THE PERSONS

To the kindergarten child, Jesus is interpreted as a man—who was once a baby as he himself was—who sought to help everyone.

To the primary child, Jesus is interpreted as a person with a spirit of kindness, goodness, helpfulness—a person whom we should seek to be like. He had friends who worked with him, and he needs us to be the same kind of friends.

In the junior group, in addition to all of the above, Jesus is interpreted as one who had a plan for a better world, who sought to make the world better, and who called some men to work with him. He was so truthful in saying what he believed and thought that the Roman Empire put him to death. His spirit was so strong that he could not be killed but continues to live now, and can live in us if we will permit him to do so. To the junior, Jesus should become the one to whom he pledges his own loyalty as a follower.

With intermediates, seniors, youths, and adults, we seek to accomplish all of this plus a deeper understanding of what Jesus' teachings mean for one's life and society about him, reaching out to the whole world—economic, social, political, national, and international.

We must seek to make Jesus so real in the lives of our pupils that they will want to lead others to follow him and to spread his teachings throughout the whole world.

The Christian church is endeavoring to be Christian and to lead people to be Christians. As a part of these objectives, therefore, we should make sure that each one is brought to the place where he commits himself to Jesus. There is something very definite that happens to one when he surrenders his life to Christ. God is able to come into his life, saving power is his, and his own goals become more and more in keeping with the kingdom of God.

As God's helpers, the minister, the parent, and the teacher will keep sensitive to the growing child and endeavor to help

him in this matter when the time is ripe. Although primary children have been known to make this decision, special attention should be given when the child reaches later junior years. If he does not make that surrender and commitment by the time he is twelve, the minister and his helpers will still be alert to give him the guidance that will bring him to such a commitment.

Once this surrender and commitment has been made, however, let us remember that our evangelistic task is not complete. As the person continues to grow, from time to time he will be faced with making a choice in some experience or relationship of life; and the church must help him make those choices that bring him more completely into the Christian way of living. Again and again he must answer the question: What will I permit Christ to do with me in this situation? It is during these uncertain years that he needs the guidance of the church. Sooner or later he should reach the place where once he sees the Christian way there will be no question in his mind whether he will follow it.

Many church leaders—clergy and laymen, teachers and parents—have been lax in their attention to this objective. On the other hand, some who have been very diligent have not been wise in their teachings and practices concerning it. All who have any responsibility in dealing with young or old need to give it more thoughtful consideration. Certainly, one must avoid confusing this experience of definite commitment to Christ with the act of joining the church, although in a real sense when one makes this commitment he does consciously enter the Christian fellowship. (See Chapter VII for further consideration of this matter.)

In personal living and social consciousness.—With nursery children, the objectives are to help them learn Christian conduct, which in their case may go no further than learning to play with others co-operatively. It may include some limited

appreciation of persons of another color. With kindergarten children, the personal applications broaden to include conduct at home, at church, "helping mother and daddy," and a wider appreciation for persons of another color. With older groups these objectives widen until, with youths and adults, they deal with the broader social responsibility—justice for all regardless of race, creed, or color; the betterment of society; and one's responsibility as a citizen. Christian statesmanship, Christian teaching, the ministry, and nursing are shown as professions which provide an altruistic mode of life.

It is in helping persons to reach this ultimate goal of social consciousness that missionary education has a place, and the principle of step-by-step goals is just as important here as in other areas.

With nursery and beginner children the basic Christian teachings of how to live are the basic teachings of true missionary education. With primary children we can introduce the ways different races and nationalities live, and can help the children find some needs to which primary children can give, sharing what they have or what they can make.

Junior age children have geographical studies in school which give them a sense of distances and a knowledge of other countries. These open the way for the church to introduce more intensive studies of various peoples, what the church is doing to meet their needs, and how juniors can help.

Above the junior age the church seeks to broaden the fields of missionary study, and deepen the concern for others. Experiences of sharing with other peoples are increased in number and extent. What is called the "missionary mind" is gradually developed. Step by step the ultimate objective is reached. That is, it is reached when *good teaching* is done! Missionary education thus becomes not a separate kind of education but the very heart of Christian education itself. For how can one become Christian unless he is missionary in spirit?

Giving to missionary causes becomes more satisfactory and more easily developed when the church school, women's organizations, and other groups work together for a thorough program of missionary education and giving.

Using these objectives effectively

So we see that objectives vary with the growth and development of the pupil. We need to know *where* in the development in a specific area our pupils are. This will determine where we can start, how much we can assume, and on what we must work.

There are three very important matters relating to objectives which the minister should keep in mind as he leads others:

1. All teachers and other leaders should have some insight into the *whole range* of objectives, both in the various areas of living and the total age range. That is, each teacher should see life whole. Specifically, the primary teacher should be aware of what the nursery and beginner teachers have attempted to do, how far they were able to lead the child, and what they did not accomplish. At the same time, they should know what will be attempted in the junior department or class. Although curriculum writers do bear these things in mind, it is easy for the primary teacher to assume too much or too little and perhaps "burn over" ground which should be covered in the classes following hers. Only by a study of the total range of objectives and their specifics for each age in a given area can a teacher realize the limits within which she should work. This leads us to the second point pertaining to objectives.

2. All leaders should remember to attempt only a part of the objectives in a given area in any given age group, realizing that other persons have been working with these pupils before and that still others will teach the group next year.

3. All leaders should try to determine the extent to which

each pupil has traveled toward these objectives, and proceed from there. This is the task of discovering "where the pupil is." One who studies his pupils will discover that each is unique and needs special study and guidance if growth in Christian personality is to take place. On the other hand, there are common needs within an age group. These make it possible for the teacher to work with several pupils in a class at the same time. One can discover "where the pupil is" in various ways. A few of them are mentioned here:

a) Listen to their conversations. A public teacher who was also a Sunday school teacher learned what a group of girls thought about God by overhearing their conversation in the hall at school one day.

b) Ask them questions. One can often discover what persons think by their answers.

c) Use a questionnaire or check list. This will often reveal the extent to which persons have grown. However, educators do not rely so much on this method as they have in the past. Persons of high school age, especially, have been known to answer questionaires or check lists, not as they really think or feel, but as they think the leader wants them to, or in a way that will cause the leader to enter into a heated discussion. So this method has to be used cautiously.

d) Watch for the general type of responses as one proceeds with the study. Many little comments and expressions will indicate unexpected points of view, attitudes or ways of thinking, which the person might not reveal when asked directly. When one is off guard he is likely to reveal things which he would not disclose in more guarded moments.

Up to this point we have dealt with objectives in keeping with the classification of experiences adopted by the International Council of Religious Education. These are the classifications used by the curriculum committees in most of the denominations in building units of study.

Dr. Ernest J. Chave, of the University of Chicago Divinity

School, has recently developed a classification of objectives or "end-points," as he calls them, that warrant further study. In terms of "spiritual goals" he lists the following experiences as vital, and suggests that wherever these experiences are being provided, spiritual goals are being realized, "whether in church, school, home, play or other situation." These ten classifications are:

1. *Sense of worth.*—A growing person gradually comes to a sense of worth and is stimulated to live above the animal and mechanistic levels of activity.

2. *Social sensitivity.*—Each person should find that life gains its greatest meaning and values in the process of mutual respect of person for person.

3. *Appreciation of the universe.*—Religion puts life into cosmic perspective, and seeks universal principles of thought and action. In this, developing experience, ideas of God, and other theological beliefs and traditions may have growing significance.

4. *Discrimination of values.*—Whatever experiences refine tastes and behaviors, widen the gap between blind impulses and intelligent choices, and stimulate worthy goals, are furthering spiritual growth.

5. *Responsibility and accountability.*—The use of freedom, the appreciations of laws, the development of self-control, and the ready adjustments to the obligations of co-operative living. It involves a growing understanding of such concepts as will of God, judgment, duty and conscience.

6. *Co-operative fellowship.*—Reconstruction of society, the realization of the kingdom of God. The concept of the family, community, nation and the church.

7. *Quest for truth and realization of values.*—Seek to help growing persons to appreciate the historical nature of religion, to find satisfaction in enlarging insights into truth and in ability to increasingly realize developing ideals. Seek to awaken a dynamic faith.

8. *Integration of experience into a growing philosophy of life.* —Religion at its best faces the conflicting and perplexing experi-

ences of good and evil, joy and suffering, justice and injustice, vitality and death, and in the light of racial history seeks to formulate working principles for interpretation of events, and for achievement of individual and social developing objectives.

9. *Language, symbols and records.*—Each generation contributes a record of religious beliefs and attitudes, practices and institutions. The Bible, church history, and other sources furnish data for the study of religion. Religious education *selects* from this rich inheritance materials suitable for each age level, to give background for religious ideas and practices, and to enrich and validate growing concepts and loyalties.

10. *Group celebrations.*—In this area young and old need to understand how customs of worship, organized practices of religion and techniques for shaping group attitudes have operated in the past and should function today for the furtherance of religious ends.[1]

Experimentation with curriculum built upon these goals, or "end-points," is continuing.

Ministers need to keep these functional goals in mind even though they and their workers are using curriculum based on other ways of identifying religious experiences. The minister should recognize that wherever he can direct the growth of persons toward these "end-points," regardless of the curriculum and teaching procedures used, he and his teachers are furthering religion in the lives of the persons involved. The grave danger is that we will permit our religion to become static. If our religion is to be a continuing power for good in our own lives and in the lives of others, it must grow in us, and we must grow in it.

Ministers will seek to lead their lay workers through a study of the objectives in religion as set forth in this chapter, so that they all may understand what the church expects of them and how they can grow in their religious life. One or more workers' conferences can well consider this problem. Frequent

[1] Taken from a mimeographed outline, with the permission of Dr. Chave.

reference to these objectives in teachers' meetings and in one's personal study will help to fix them firmly in mind.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. —Luke 2:52

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CHAPTER III

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION THROUGH THE PULPIT

In a certain small city Halloween had become a time of rowdyism. Property destruction so great that many of the townspeople were disturbed. The pastor of the largest church in the community decided to arouse his congregation to action. Respect for property and parental responsibility became the subjects of pulpit themes. Result: the following Halloween was observed in a more law-abiding fashion. The pulpit was used for an educational purpose. Changes took place as a result.

The pulpit has always been an educational medium for the minister, and great ministers have always used it as such. Doctrinal themes, the way of Christian living, the means to genuine happiness, the improvement of home life, Biblical interpretation, help in private devotions and prayer, a deeper understanding of God, the work of the church, preparation for a financial or building campaign, the way to meet disaster, have each been the subject of one or more messages from the pulpit where there is a carefully planned preaching program.

If the minister is to teach religion through the pulpit, and do it in keeping with the recognized principles of personal growth, he must keep several things in mind.

Preaching to felt needs

His sermons will deal with what he discovers to be the *felt needs* of the people. Felt needs are those problems which persons recognize and are eager to solve. They know that they

are lacking in understanding at some points, that some of their attitudes or practices are not Christian, and they *are ready to listen.*

The writer was in a friend's study one day and asked him how he chose his sermon themes. His wife had just told him of a visit from one of the parishioners before he had come in. "I know that woman wants to talk about immortality," he said. "She recently lost her husband and is quite concerned. If she is concerned, others are likely to be also. I shall soon preach on immortality *for the sake of this woman and her friends.* She is ready to listen now." This woman had a felt need. Her pastor sought to meet it in part through the pulpit.

Another minister friend, soon after assignment to a church, was approached by a woman who asked him to preach about the second coming of Jesus. He did not sense her felt need and ignored it. Some time later he asked the members of his congregation to mark a check list so that he might know some of their wishes regarding sermon themes. The returns showed that twenty persons were confused on the second coming and wanted him to preach on the subject. He did so!

By keeping an alert mind and open ears a minister can discover many felt needs—in conversations, in the discussion of sermons already preached, during pastoral calls, and at other times. When persons learn that a minister is preaching about the questions and problems on which they feel the need of help, there is a state of "readiness"—as the psychologist calls it. The people are "ready" to listen. The minister does not have to arouse interest; the interest is already there.

Seeking unfelt needs

To make his pulpit contribute to the teaching of religion, a minister's sermons will also deal with *unfelt needs, seeking to make the people conscious of them.* This is entirely different from dealing with felt needs—at least in the beginning. The average person has "blind spots"—and many of them. It is

difficult to arouse an interest in questions about which people have no concern. They simply *see no need* for considering them.

If the minister is alert in contacts with his people he soon learns to recognize unfelt needs. The way people speak of other races, or of the people on "the other side of the tracks," reveals the need of a Christian appreciation of persons or groups differing from their own. A narrow interpretation of scripture often indicates a need for an understanding of Bible history. Failure to sense security in the midst of grief or catastrophe reveals a lack of faith in God, or a misunderstanding of him.

There are times when one wonders whether he can keep up in this rapidly changing world. He wonders if he dare put anything into such rigid form as the printed page. Yet, the thing that saves us from becoming rigid and unresourceful as leaders is just this practice of keeping close to the people, discovering their needs and re-evaluating our approaches from time to time. In other words, we must keep a flexibility in our own work that permits us to make ready changes in content, method, and terminology.

Having discovered these *unfelt needs,* how can the minister arouse an interest on the part of his people to the place where they want to do something about it? This is, perhaps, the most difficult task of the minister who would be an educational evangelist. The old-time revival preacher spent from a third to a half of his time in a series of special meetings, seeking to make persons feel their need of God, and need for forgiveness of their sins. The results he attained in conversions often depended upon his skill in doing this.

The evangelists of my boyhood experiences painted vivid pictures of what happened to the drinking man, and to his family, to make their hearers feel the need of abolishing the liquor business. They imaginatively held their listeners over "the flames of hell" to make them want to escape "by the

grace of God." That is, they made them *see the situation,* and then often appealed to their sense of fear, or honor, or desire for better things.

Although many ministers today would not care to use the approach of the revivalist of a quarter of a century ago, yet let us not overlook this point: unless the minister today learns ways of actually arousing people to a sense of need for a change in their thinking, feeling, and acting, he cannot hope to teach religion to his people.

There are several ways of awakening persons to unfelt needs which have proved successful in most instances. No one of them will always work. The minister will often yearn for deeper insight into human nature.

The minister should let people see the actual situation in which action is desired. This can best be done by taking persons *to the situation,* where they see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears what is taking place. If this is impossible or impractical, one can either have an eye witness report on the situation or bring pictures of the situation to them. Motion pictures are of value, especially sound motion pictures, in helping persons to see a need and in arousing them to action. Still pictures in slide form are also effective. If an eye witness or pictures are not available, then the minister can through reading and his own travels gather stories of situations or cases that show the need. For instance, by relating two or three cases of persons who have lost their faith, the minister may help his people sense such weaknesses in their own lives. Thus they may awake to their need for help at this point.

The appeal to interest should be made through members of the family. Fathers and mothers respond to appeal on behalf of their children, and children on behalf of their parents.

People can be appealed to through some goal which they have set for themselves. For example, I have pledged myself to help God do his work. But someone tells me that if I am

to reach that goal I must change some undesirable characteristic. I immediately become interested in correcting the fault in order to carry out my pledge.

The minister can help persons to satisfy the desire for recognition, friends, new experiences, and security. It is best when we can bring a person to prefer a clear conscience to recognition from others; to seek his friendships with the finest and highest; to find new experiences in the thrills that come from adventuring for social justice; and to discover his basic security in the satisfaction of his own conscience and fellowship with God.

Speaking the language of the people

To make the greatest use of the pulpit for teaching, the minister must use terms that have meaning to the people. One cannot teach when persons cannot understand what is said. For instance, Dubois in *The Point of Contact in Teaching* (a book written some years ago but as applicable now as then), tells of a native who interpreted for an English-speaking missionary. Shepherd life was foreign to people of that country, so the missionary's story of the lost sheep became the story of the cow that lost her calf. Cows and calves were within the experience and understanding of those people.

The minister needs especially to watch this in dealing with theological teachings. Many of our theological terms, quite intelligible to the man who studies them for three or four years, have little or no meaning to the rank and file of church people. When an unfamiliar term is used it should be followed by a defining clause. One can never safely assume that theological terms are understood.

Some terms which are often used and need to be clarified for many congregations are "salvation," "saved by grace," "atonement," "The Christ," "justification by faith," "sanctification," and many others. To these also might be added more modern terms, such as "ecumenical."

A part of the difficulty here is that we have not given our people sufficient teaching in doctrinal matters. Also, because of the variety of interpretations of the Bible and religious doctrines being broadcast over the radio, many persons are greatly confused about the meaning of many religious terms.

To combat this the minister must stress teaching church doctrines. If we will put the meaning of our doctrines in terms of contemporary living and terminology, we will make better progress. One who has worked with children intelligently will agree that doctrinal teaching, for example about God, can begin early in the life of a child, but only in terms of the child's own experiences.

It is in this matter of the use of terms, that many ministers miss their opportunity to teach religion to children from the pulpit. One has only to use a few terms beyond the comprehension and experience of the children in the congregation to lose their attention. Incidentally, in most congregations, if the minister would phrase his words so that children could understand them, there would be no question of the adults understanding.

Using the Bible effectively

The minister will make adequate use of the Bible, bringing well-chosen passages to bear upon the subject of his sermon. More and more, ministers are using the newer translations for the sake of clarity. This is in keeping with the best teaching procedures.

It is gratifying to note an increase in biblical interpretations from the pulpit. Most laymen want to have the Bible interpreted to them. They will not always accept the interpretation, nor can we expect them to do so. Nevertheless, the "Bible preacher" is quite in demand today. Not only are many persons eager for this biblical teaching, but there is serious need for it. By providing this, a pastor will often save

his people from the extremely literal and warped interpretations that are so prevalent over the radio.

Of course, the ideal in preaching content is a balanced program including the various kinds of experience, with ample Bible interpretation.

Being specific

The minister must be specific in the implications of his ideas if he is to teach religion through the pulpit. Generalizations, as a rule, make no deep or effective impression. Of course, specific teaching and preaching sometimes causes persons to complain. "Straight preaching" is hard to take. "Straight preaching" does not imply loud talk or ranting. Some ministers have learned to drive home the truth with a disarming good nature. People wince under their preaching but do not become angry at the preacher.

Letting the people speak

Another essential element, if the pulpit is to be a successful channel for teaching religion, is to give persons an opportunity to *register their convictions, or their decisions* relative to a given issue or problem.

The complete cycle of teaching applies to the pulpit as well as to the classroom. What is that complete cycle?

1. Make persons *feel the need for change*. Sometimes the change for them will be a complete conversion. At other times it will be an intensification of their present activities or a deepening of their convictions.

2. Show persons better ways, or the solutions for their problems. How can I do better than I am doing? What are the means by which I can do it?

3. Give them an opportunity to make a choice, or set up a situation which will lead to a choice. (The book salesman would call it making people "sign on the dotted line.")

4. Give parishioners an opportunity to practice what you have led them to choose. With younger children this means actually setting up a situation with help and guidance. Let us assume that the children have decided to send a box of Christmas gifts to a mission field. The leader is now obligated to help them choose what should go into the box and provide a time for packing it. With older children it is often necessary to be as specific in assistance. And if a father or mother decides to introduce family prayers in the home, you may have to help provide the materials—prayers and readings—for the devotional practice.

5. Check on what has been done and what you have led others to do in order to discover its value.

Ministers use various methods to help persons register their convictions, or decisions. Providing a card to check following a sermon, or series of sermons, is a method that has been widely used. The value of the card is determined by the degree to which it is specific in helping persons to reach decisions or arrive at convictions.

A card used following a series of sermons on home religion reads like this:

> Seeing the need for providing devotional practices in my (our) home, I (we) have decided to make our home life more nearly Christlike by—
>
> Saying grace regularly at meals.
>
> Spending a few minutes daily in family devotions.
>
> Watching my (our) conversation to keep it clean, constructive, and void of unkind remarks about others or about the church.
>
> Reading my (our) church paper regularly.
>
> Providing wholesome recreation in the home for all members of the family, and remembering to follow such an experience with a devotional closing.

A decision card to be used following a series of sermons on stewardship reads like this:

> I am convinced that all I possess is a gift from God for wise social use. I am therefore committed to—
>
> Making a tithe of my income the minimum of my giving.
>
> Studying and budgeting my time so that a fair share of it each week is given for specific church and altruistic purpose.
>
> Practicing prayer daily.
>
> Studying the objects of service and giving my time to those causes which seem to need it the most.

Some ministers ask collectors to pick up the cards during the service; some use a ritual, the people coming to the altar or communion table to deposit the cards; and some provide a receptacle at the door where they can be dropped as people leave the sanctuary. Others find that a period of silence, provided just before the persons check the cards, or during the time they are to check them, is a valuable help in making decisions. Again, some ministers use an ante room where the minister meets those who seem to be at the point of making a decision or commitment, and gives them an opportunity to talk the matter through and register their proposed action.

Others still use effectively the old method of having persons come forward to the front seat or communion rail to indicate their decision. Since the days when it was the common practice in most churches to have persons come to the communion rail for prayer and decision, or conversion, the church has been lax in providing other means of securing definite commitments. But if the minister is to make his pulpit an effective

educational medium, he must find ways to lead persons through the point of decision.

It is also quite essential to follow up these decisions with the resources and helps that will enable the person to carry them out. How a pastor in South Dakota provided this follow-up is indicated by the following quotation from his bulletin for a Week of Dedication program:[1]

In order that today's personal commitments may become effective, the following plan will be observed in your church this week:

Monday 8:00 P.M.

All who commit themselves to work in the Sunday church school will meet at the church for a period of instruction and planning in order to make our Christian education program more effective. Please be there without fail. If it is absolutely impossible for you to come, please notify your pastor.

Tuesday 8:00 P.M.

All who commit themselves to home or personal evangelism or to lead in community prayer groups will meet at the church for a period of instruction and planning in order to carry on our plans for Lenten Season evangelism in our church.

Wednesday 8:00 P.M.

Those committing themselves to singing in the choir, ushering, or arranging the sanctuary for worship, will meet at the church to receive instructions and practice in these services.

Thursday 8:00 P.M.

All who commit themselves to family and personal devotions and to observing table graces will meet at the church to consider methods and materials helpful in carrying out these commitments.

Friday 8:00 P.M.

All who commit themselves to uniting with this church either on profession of faith or by membership transfer will meet at

[1] The Methodist Church *Winner,* Winner, S. Dak. John V. Leach, pastor.

the church to learn the procedure to be followed in carrying out this commitment.

Letting the people learn by doing

To teach effectively through the pulpit the minister will also provide experiences similar to those he wants the people to practice when alone or at home. This would apply especially—but not exclusively—to the teaching of ways of worship.

For example, the minister wants his people to practice periods of silence. He can introduce into the service of worship, periods of silence lasting from sixty seconds to three minutes in length, and suggest in the bulletin, or audibly, two or three things about which they might meditate during the silence.

A pastor said to his congregation one morning. "Instead of the usual prayer by the pastor this morning, I am suggesting that we pray silently for three minutes. There are three things which need your prayers." He mentioned the three and then said. "Let us pray." At the end of the three minutes he closed the prayer. After the service a businessman said. "I always appreciate your public prayers, but the one this morning was especially good." A boy of twelve said. "Mr. B you didn't give me a long enough time to pray this morning."

Aside from the fact that the period of silence was a worthy part of the service of worship, it taught the people something of the method of silence which they should practice privately.

We fail sometimes to realize the value of having the congregation stand when the offering is brought to the front for presentation and consecration. This not only adds much to that part of the service, but it teaches members of the congregation something of the attitude toward the stewardship of money which we hope they will have. It is a step in stewardship education. The same can be said about having the congregation stand for the reading of the scripture. Guiding the people through the experience which dramatizes the idea helps to teach religion through the pulpit.

Preaching in units

Another means by which the minister teaches religion effectively through the pulpit is to plan the preaching in units of two or three presentations. These sermons should all be closely related to the same theme and with common objectives, each sermon leading the congregation a step further in their thinking and living. Long series of sermons have usually been frowned upon by ministers and congregations, but a short series, which brings members of the congregation to a definite commitment, has real value. This is especially true where the congregation consists of the same persons Sunday after Sunday. Its value is lost in the degree to which the minister has to preach to a "floating" congregation.

Utilizing the church school lessons

If the minister will watch closely the church school lessons which his juniors, intermediates, young people, and adults are studying, he will find a fine opportunity to use the pulpit for teaching. The better lesson materials are organized in units, two or more sessions in the same area of experience. Often there is a passage of scripture to be memorized during the unit. This is generally true of junior and intermediate lessons. By keeping in touch with the work the teachers are doing the minister can preach on the theme of a given unit at the close of the study. For the scripture lesson in his sermon he may ask the class or department to be present and repeat in unison the memorized passage. This gives added meaning to his preaching, as well as added significance to what the pupils have studied and memorized.

This chapter does not presume to say all that can be said about the pulpit as a channel for teaching religion. However, it is a starting point for the minister who wishes to make the most of his opportunity. The pastor who cares will deal with

the felt needs and the unfelt need of his people. He will use terms which his listeners understand. He will make an adequate use of the Bible and interpret religious doctrines. He will speak in specific terms, give persons an opportunity to register their decisions, and help them in carrying them out. He will lead them through the kind of experiences he wants them to have, and he will relate his preaching to the studies in his church school.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

—Luke 4:16-19

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CHAPTER IV

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION TO SMALL CHILDREN

In the usual age group classifications the term "children" denotes all under twelve years of age. This is the basis for grading and grouping suggested for the children's division in the church school by the International Council of Religious Education, and thus by their constituent religious bodies.

When we think of the minister's own contacts with children, however, we find that he has a quite different relationship with juniors (nine- to eleven-year-olds, fourth to sixth grades) than with children younger than the fourth grade. His relationship with seventh to ninth grade boys and girls, however, is very much the same as with those in the fourth to sixth grades. So in this chapter we will consider his relationship with children below the fourth grade, and in the next chapter, with boys and girls of the fourth to ninth grades.

This does not mean, necessarily, that the grading in the church school should be changed from that adopted by the International Council of Religious Education. It does mean, however, that the minister *in his own contacts* with them will think of small children (one to eight years) as one group and boys and girls (nine to fourteen years) as another group. This chapter deals with the minister and the children one to eight years of age.

Those ministers who sincerely strive to promote religious growth find that they have contacts with small children in various ways, beginning when the child is very young. The christening—an early contact—immediately marks that child

as one dedicated to God, and gives him a new relationship with the minister. Perhaps the more evident and immediate value, however, is the effect on the parents. As the child grows to the age of understanding, and sees other children christened, even this early relationship with the minister takes on meaning for him, and the christening itself becomes a source of joy and confidence for him.

Ministers should recognize these little children as a part of their parish, and seek to provide, either directly or indirectly, those associations which make for religious growth.

What we want for small children

What do we want to happen in the lives of these little children? Many things. Let us consider a few of them:

1. We want them to have a happy, secure, and natural home life, where peace and contentment abound.
2. We want their association with the church to be friendly.
3. We want them to become acquainted with the big and ever-enlarging world about them.
4. We want them to associate the name "God" with goodness, love, growing things, and helpfulness.
5. We want them to have a sense of security in their parents, teachers, and pastor.
6. We want them to know their pastor as a friend whom they like to meet.
7. We want them to know about the Bible and some of its stories.
8. We want them to know the difference between good and bad.
9. We want them to grow in their appreciation of other people, their playmates and schoolmates, people of other races and different economic groups.
10. We want them to learn to take care of themselves—dressing, eating, toilet.

11. We want them to learn to think of Jesus as a man who went about doing good and helping others.

12. We want them to learn to play in a friendly way with other children.

13. We want them to take the first steps in learning to pray meaningfully.

What we will not do

There are some things—sometimes tried by earnest workers with children—that we *will not do*. For instance, we will not attempt to teach the child *all* of the Bible during these eight years. We will not teach him a consecutive story of the life of Jesus (this belongs in his junior years). We will not teach him about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. These are gruesome and difficult stories for children of this age, and should be left for the junior years. We will not teach him long memory passages of scripture which mean little to him *now*. We will not teach him the Apostles' Creed. We will not try to teach him about the Trinity. We will not put a cross on the worship center in his departmental room. We leave this for juniors and older persons for whom it has more meaning. Instead we will use a picture on the worship center, and select scripture passages which small children can understand.

In our eagerness to pass on our own beliefs to others—especially to children—we run the serious danger of simply indoctrinating them, instead of *guiding them through experiences* which help them develop their own concepts of God, Jesus, and other religious realities. Of course, we want them to have doctrinal beliefs, but we want those beliefs to be based on *their* conclusions rather than to be accepted simply because their pastor or teacher said they were true. If we cut across the experience of the child by indoctrination, we cut short his creativity and his urge to find out for himself. He is likely to think: "Why look further if this is the answer?" We

will also fail to give him a basic experience of faith that will undergird him in times of stress.

In time we will tell him what the Fathers have believed. But the teacher of children wisely seeks, through the child's own world and his own experiences, to make these great religious truths a reality to him. He seeks to stimulate those mental and emotional reactions that cause the child *to arrive* at the wonder of God's handiwork and his love for mankind.

Likewise, we refrain from teaching these specific things not only because they are beyond the experience and understanding of these children under nine years, but also because we thus "burn over the ground" so that the "thrill of the new" is gone when they are a part of the studies at a later period.

What the minister can do

The minister's contribution at this point is to help his workers with children—and the parents of children of these ages—to understand what the church and home *should be trying to do,* and to understand the reasons for doing so.

What else can the minister do in his relationship with children under nine?

1. He can get acquainted with them in their homes and when they are playing out of doors.

2. He can be an example of a good man through his own living. The minister teaches religion through his personality and personal contacts. Those contacts will need to be made not only in the children's homes, but in special visits to the various children's classes and departments of the church school. The *best time* for these visits in the church school will probably be when the children are studying about "the church," or about "our helpers." In this connection, the pupils (or the teacher) will invite the pastor to the class to tell something about his work as their minister. If the teacher does not sense the importance of having the children invite him, then the minister should help her see the importance.

Regardless of how it comes about, however, the minister will make sure that he visits the department often enough during the year for the children to recognize him and to sense that he likes them and is interested in what they are doing.

3. The minister will seek to improve the home life and environment of these children through helpful literature, sermons, and conferences with the parents.

4. He will provide an attractive nursery at the church where the children can be cared for during worship services.

5. He will introduce the children to the sanctuary and public services of worship—or teach his workers with children to do so—so that they will feel at home in the church.

6. The minister will see that they have a wholesome playground under competent supervision.

7. He will provide wholesome story materials for them through the church school papers, suggestions of books for the home, and library facilities in the church school. This may lead to a children's loan library in small rural communities.

8. He will see that the needy have clothes, coal, medical care. He will do this through welfare agencies, if there are some in his community. If there are none, he may be instrumental in setting up such an agency.

9. The minister will endeavor to provide an efficient church school where religion is taught intelligently and warmly and within the understanding of the child. In many instances he will provide additional sessions (besides the Sunday morning school), thus making more teaching available for the children.

Ministers are usually eager to have children attend the church's public worship services. They use various methods to draw them to church. The children's sermon has probably been tried most frequently. But most children's sermons are not good teaching. As a rule, they are adult ideas in adult language, too formal, and often seek to teach by symbols or objects (called object lessons) which call for symbolic interpretations. The small child is a literalist.

Some people believe that small children should attend the public worship service regularly so that when they are older they will have acquired the habit. But experience reveals that if regularity in attendance is maintained through a long period of years, it is rather because the service continues to appeal to the growing youth. Of course, in any work with children the parents' co-operation should be secured.

Some ministers tell the children a story and then dismiss them to another room, or to go home. This is likely to make children feel that only a part of the service is for them. When will they feel that all of it is for them?

In a one or two-room church, where the children stay for the public service—with or without their parents—then the minister might include some illustrations from the lives of children and use terms which they can understand. He will remember to speak to them at the close of the service when he greets his other parishioners.

The larger churches, of course, often have leadership and space that makes possible the holding of extended sessions or additional sessions Sunday morning during the public worship hour. Many children's workers feel that this age child should be in such extended or additional sessions rather than to have the minister try to meet their need in the public worship hour. Children under ten years of age can be helped much more in their religious growth through the extended sessions.

The most effective work of the minister with this age group will undoubtedly be in helping parents and church school teachers to become good teachers of religion. He will also see the value of co-operating with child welfare agencies in the community. For a discussion of these indirect approaches for the minister in teaching religion to children, see Chapters VIII-XI.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. —Matt. 18:5

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CHAPTER V

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION TO BOYS AND GIRLS

By boys and girls is meant children nine to fourteen years inclusive. Again the reader is reminded that leaders in religious education have long made two major divisions of persons ranging in age from one to twenty-four years, namely, children up to eleven years and youth twelve to twenty-four years. In the local church they have subdivided these divisions into departments—nursery (three-year-olds); kindergarten (four- and five-year-olds); primary (six- to eight-year-olds, or grades 1 to 3); juniors (nine- to eleven-year-olds, or grades 4 to 6); intermediates (twelve to fourteen years, or grades 7 to 9); seniors (fifteen to seventeen years, or grades 10 to 12);[1] and youth (eighteen to twenty-four years). But from the standpoint of state and national work with these ages the two major divisions have been maintained.

However, as indicated in Chapter IV, the pastor should think in terms of three major groupings: children, through eight years; boys and girls, nine to fourteen years; and youth, fifteen to twenty-four years. The reason for this grouping of boys and girls nine to fourteen years is that these boys and girls are no longer children. Neither are they youth. In many churches those twelve to fourteen years of age are classed with youths fifteen and older. This seems a mistake. The teaching methods used with boys and girls twelve to fourteen are

[1] When the public school has a four-year high school, the departmental organization in the church should be intermediates (grades 7 to 8) and seniors (grades 9 to 12).

more nearly the methods used with those nine to eleven. This does not mean that we will have a department for boys and girls nine to fourteen years, unless in small churches it is absolutely necessary. Experience reveals that in churches where departments have to be combined, *it is better* to put juniors with intermediates than to combine juniors and primary or intermediates and seniors.

It is also during these years—nine to fourteen—that boys and girls are taken into church membership. Although here again we must recognize the individual and his needs, the church has more or less common goals for this age group and the minister needs to work with this group accordingly.

Let us, therefore, not confuse departmental organization with the grouping which the minister may make for his own contacts and work with this age. But he should think in terms of the whole six-year span, nine to fourteen years, since so many of the things he wants to do with the boys and girls of this period are what should be done for this whole age range. Leading them to a decision to join the church and training them for membership is just one case in point.

What we want for boys and girls

What do we want to accomplish in the lives of these boys and girls? Because they are older than children, with expanding lives, they are a real challenge to the church. They can be a source of joy to the minister if he works faithfully with them. Some specific things should happen in relation to their religious life:

1. They should develop a growing appreciation of Jesus, not only as a good man—as little children think of him—but as a person with convictions, who stood for those convictions even though it meant his death. They should come to see him as a "God-filled" man who did what seemed right to him regardless of the cost. They should decide to make him their guide in life, and thus their Savior. They should acquire a

growing insight into the *whole* life of Jesus. The story of his life should be taught consecutively and chronologically to this age group. Jesus' teachings, especially as they apply to the lives of boys and girls, should be made clear to them.

2. They should come to know the composition of the Bible, its background, and *how to use it.* They should memorize some of its great passages.

3. They should think of the world as being God's, and should learn to recognize his laws and obey them.

4. They should acquire a broadening appreciation of other people. There should be a special emphasis upon groups other than their own. They should learn to become social beings, learn how the Christian respects the rights of other people, in both their personal relationships and their property.

5. During this age we also want to lead them to become intelligent members of the church. We want them to acquire the understanding and practice of prayer and to have some appreciation for the hymnody of the church. During this period they should learn to sing a number of hymns from memory.

6. We want to provide wholesome activities which will interest them. This is a positive step toward the elimination of delinquency. It is also the beginning of their vocational guidance.

7. During this age we want them to realize the value of money and to become discriminating in earning and spending it. They should learn to budget the money they have.

What the minister should do

What specifically should the minister endeavor to do with boys and girls? He will seek to be a true friend to them. He will find time to play with them, to go on hikes with the older ones, to become acquainted with their interests and aspirations. He should give special thought to boys and girls who do not have a father, or whose father is not interested

in giving time to them. He may become something of a hero to those who, at this hero-worshiping age, do not find such a hero in their own father. The strength of the tie binding them to the church in later youth may be determined in part by their friendly relationship with their minister during these earlier years. Emotional ties are strong. This age is a good time to foster them.

To help him become acquainted with them and gain their confidence, the minister will show an interest in their out-of-church activities. He will occasionally visit their school, and even their classes in the school. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts will be one of his interests. He should be concerned about the "hangouts" where the older ones of this age range gather. If any should get into trouble he should appear with them in court and arrange for their parole. Perhaps he can introduce them to a hobby and see that they have an understanding adult leader and a place to meet. One pastor has eliminated delinquency among the boys of this age by doing just these three things—providing a hobby program, finding a leader for them, and securing an old barn in which they could meet.

The minister will endeavor to provide a place for them in the work of the church—a place where they will feel that they are a part of the church. Ministers are now doing this in various ways. The boys' and girls' (or junior) choir is popular in many churches and gives the youngsters a part in the public worship. There is little reason why every church cannot have such a choir. Another church lets boys of this age help take the offering. Why should not the public worship service—especially in the smaller churches—be given over quite largely to this age group one Sunday a month? Men who are the regular ushers should relish the opportunity to help train boys and girls in church activities. Again, pastors can often use them to distribute church envelopes, or church notices to parishioners' homes.

Of course, helping boys and girls to take part in the church life involves a thorough program of training in churchmanship. More persons of this age become members of the church than of any other age. Of course, in some denominations their anticipation or expectancy is built up for their confirmation.

This preparatory program for church membership deserves careful and thorough planning. Some of it can be done by church school teachers, as they lead the various units of study dealing with Christian living and the church. The curriculum today is rich in this respect. Any pastor can secure a list of the units in the regular courses of study of his denomination by writing to his national board of education. Some of this training must be done by the parents as they build up concepts of the church and its work. But the pastor also needs to have *a direct relationship* with boys and girls for this purpose. He is the minister. To many persons he represents the church in a way that no one else can.

Many ministers themselves hold a class in "preparation for church membership." Some do this during the regular church school session; others during the week. Usually ten to twelve sessions are held. Such a class should consider such questions as: When is a boy or girl a Christian? How did the church come to be? What is it supposed to do? What is it doing? How is it organized? What is the meaning of baptism, membership, sacrament of the Lord's Supper? What is the meaning of the various parts of the public worship service? What do the various symbols mean? What can boys and girls do in the church?

To help further the learning process the minister will lead these boys and girls into various activities. For instance, a series of interviews to discover what various persons think of the church and what it has meant in their lives, will help boys and girls develop an appreciation of the church. A scrapbook or record book about their own church and its activities will

help them to become better acquainted with it. A visit to other churches in the community will increase their understanding and appreciation of other denominations. A study of worship and its meaning may lead them to arrange a small chapel with an altar in which they can plan and conduct their own worship services.

The place where the minister can do a great deal to help boys and girls understand the meaning of religion is at the *service where they are received into membership.* This occasion should be an outstanding one in their experience. It can more easily be made so if they are received into the church service in a group by themselves—not included with adults. An exception would be when a family comes into the church as a group. A few words regarding the meaning and importance of church membership, *spoken in terms of their understanding and experiences,* will give a lift and glow to the occasion which they will not forget. We cannot overemphasize the importance of this occasion. A father recently spoke with deep feeling of his disappointment over the slipshod way his boy had been received into the church. Incidentally, careful procedure in this matter is often the quickest way to win appreciation of parents.

The minister will also make sure that these boys and girls know how to use the Scriptures and that they memorize some great passages, taking care that passages are chosen whose meaning is within their understanding. Although many church school teachers throughout the church are doing good work along this line, there are many more who are not. In many cases of this sort the minister himself will have to assure such training for boys and girls. If he cannot teach his teachers to do this, he will have to do it himself. Learning to find places in the Bible will give boys and girls a sense of achievement in which they will take pride. The following plan may help the minister develop a technique in teaching this skill.

Introducing the Bible

The ultimate purpose of "Bible drill" is to develop skill in locating passages in the Scriptures. The immediate goals of the pupils should probably be: (1) to know the location of the more important books, such as the Psalms, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Prophets, hero stories, Philemon, James; (2) to know that each book is divided into chapters and verses; (3) to be able to find verses quickly in the more important books; (4) to know the general location of other books; (5) to know the classification of books, such as books of law, prophecies, letters, history, poetry.

Formerly the procedure was to teach the names of the books of the Bible in their order, the division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments, and the classification of the books. The newer approach is more effective. It is as follows:

1. See that each pupil has a Bible in his hands.

2. Examine the Bible in the back to see how many pages are used for maps and references. Work only with the pages of the *Bible text.*

3. Have the pupils hold the Bible with *bound* edge on the table (or lap) ready to open as directed.

4. Direct the boys and girls to open the Bible in the *middle* of the book. Ask: "What do you find?" Their answer will be: *Psalms.*

5. "Now close the book. Now open it to Psalms. What part of the Bible do you turn to?" *Middle.* Repeat this process two or three times.

6. "Now turn halfway through the second half of the book. What do you find?" *Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John—probably Matthew or Mark.* Point out the four Gospels, turn to them, become familiar with their names. Repeat them together.

7. "Close your book. Find the four Gospels. How far through do you turn?" *Three fourths.*

8. "Close your book. Find the Psalms." (See that they do.)

"Close your book again. Find one of the Gospels. How many Gospels?" *Four.* "Name them."

9. "Close your book. Find the Gospels. Close it. Find Psalms." Repeat again if you think it necessary.

10. Proceed with other portions of the Bible. Acts—the book following John. Genesis—the first book of the Bible. Letters—the books following Acts. Isaiah—the fourth book after Psalms. In each case notice the general location as to *how far* through the Bible, or in what relative position it is in the whole Bible. Continue to review other sections that have already been discovered and located. Be sure the pupils know *the location* of the more frequently used books before drilling them in chapter and verse.

11. When ready, select important passages which are understandable to juniors and intermediates, such as the Sermon on the Mount, the story of Jesus' birth, the Ninety-second Psalm. Have the pupils find these passages over and over again so that they become used to turning to certain portions of the Scriptures for these passages. Keep adding new passages or sections to the list they are learning. For practice, select some of the passages from their regular study materials.

12. Finally, lead them in a study of the classifications of the books to give them a comprehension of the variety of literature.

In a short time a group of juniors, intermediates, high school youths, or adults should learn to locate quickly any passage in the Bible. If they wish to refer to one of the less important books, such as Leviticus or Jude, they can consult the table of contents.[2]

The minister can stimulate the memorization of great passages of Scripture if he will review the units these boys and girls are studying, and plan to preach at the end of the unit

[2] Do not hesitate to introduce this drill into youth and adult groups. Most of them do not know their way in the Bible.

on that subject. At the public worship service he can have them repeat the scripture passage they have learned during their study, and then use it as the basis for his sermon that day. This gives the public service real meaning for the boys and girls. And do the parents like it!

The minister will arrange that each boy or girl leaving the primary department for the junior department receives a Bible from the church school, the board of education, or some other official group. He will also see that the church school is equipped with an adequate supply of Bibles.

Vocational guidance

The minister will make sure that a program of vocational guidance is provided for this age group. In that program he will see that the church professions and opportunities for service are presented to them. The scarcity of ministers and the growing need for missionary workers call for this emphasis. Let us not be negligent about this. Practically every denomination has a shortage of ministers. The postwar situation demands more workers at home and abroad. There is no reason why we should hesitate to tell boys and girls about the various professions for which the church needs candidates. At the same time we will stress the need for Christian living in every vocation, and the opportunities many vocations offer for Christian service. The minister will keep in touch with the units of study for this age to know of the times when they provide this vocational emphasis.

Christian teaching

The minister will see that the church and public school work together in providing more opportunities for religious education. Weekday schools of religion and vacation church schools will receive his support. He will also endeavor to create a demand in his church for longer church school sessions. There are few churches that could not have a seventy-five minute

session. Many could have the extended sessions, the school meeting for two, or two and one half, hours.

The minister must realize, however, that it is his task to find and train adults to do much that is suggested in this chapter. He should hold himself in readiness to "fill in" where others are not capable. On the other hand, there will be some experiences which *he* will share with these boys and girls. They deserve and need what his fine character can do for them. He needs the association with them.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down. —John 6:8-9, 11

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CHAPTER VI

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION TO YOUTH

By youth is meant boys and girls in high school and others up to twenty-three or twenty-five years of age.

Remember that our chief concern in this book is the *minister's* part in teaching religion to youth. But first let us think about what the church as a whole is trying to do.

What specifically does the church want to do with youth? The church wishes to help them:

1. Build a moral and religious foundation for living. They need Christian convictions and the stamina to carry out their convictions.

2. Assume their moral and religious responsibility to carry their share of the world's work.

3. See the relation of religious and biblical teaching to the scientific teachings of their day.

4. Sense the religious meanings and implications of a world built upon law and order.

5. Find a profession or occupation in which they will not lose their sense of mission, and in which their skills and purposes can be used for the welfare of mankind.

6. Make adequate preparation for Christian marriage and home life.

7. Discover the devotional values in the Bible and how to use it.

8. Become trained leaders in the church and in community enterprises.

In view of these specific objectives of the church, what will the *minister* seek to do?

Seeking to understand youth

First of all, he will seek to *understand* youth! With this in mind he will welcome personal contacts with them, and with agencies and avenues which help him to discover their interests, hopes, aims, and problems.

The war has been a desperate reality to youth. What should be their response to its dislocations and readjustments? How can they keep their idealism in face of its hard facts? How can they best meet the responsibilities and problems of peace? The minister must recognize the importance of these questions to young people of this age.

The minister can discover the interests and problems of youth if he will set himself to do it. First, he should talk with these young people a great deal. As they come to know him and to trust his confidence, they will reveal many of their conflicts. Second, he may use check lists. This method, if properly used, will give the minister many valuable insights. In using the check list concerning interests and problems, a serious and sympathetic approach should be made. If it is used when there is a spirit of worship in the group it will help. Samples of check lists and questionnaires for this purpose can be found in such books as *Guiding Individual Growth* by Burkhart, *Group Experience* by Baxter and Cassidy, and denominational manuals and guides for workers with young people. Third, let the minister read such books about youth as *The Prospect for Youth,* the November 1937 issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* or Roy Burkhart's *Understanding Youth.* The denominational handbook on youth work will also help. Fourth, he should call at the homes of young people in his parish. Conversations with parents will often reveal points of need.

Seeking to help youth

Once he has some knowledge of their needs, the minister will then seek to help them at every turn. His most fruitful approach will be in establishing a counseling program. He will make the most of interviews with them.

The minister should always try to be available *when the young person indicates the need of help*. Do not put him off. He may need to see you *now*. His problem may be serious and he may need immediate help.

Let him do most of the talking. If given a sympathetic hearing he will eventually disclose his problem. If you sense that there are some unrevealed problems, a few pertinent questions can be asked. Often he will see his problem more objectively by telling it to you, and will be able to answer his own questions. Help him think through the various solutions or possible steps he might take, but do not make the decision for him. Your decision might be the wrong one. He needs to think it through and come to his own decision. Making his own decision will give him more confidence in himself.

Never let anything he says or asks shock you. Regardless of how surprised you may be, do not reveal it. Be objective and unemotional about what he says. Thus you keep the way open for further conferences.

When he has made his decision, help him decide how to carry it out. Remember that God's spirit is also trying to help him. He moves in keeping with the laws of living. The better the counselor knows and recognizes the laws of personality growth, the more likely he will be to work in harmony with them.

Often the minister is the only person in the church who can counsel with youth in groups. In many of the smaller churches and in some larger ones, there is no one else who can help young people do their own thinking and planning. In giving this help, the minister strengthens his own ties with them. At

the same time, he is also training them for future leadership.

For best results in co-operative thinking and planning, seat the group in an informal circle or around a table. This breaks down formality, makes for friendliness, encourages participation, and also helps to maintain interest.

Be sure the question or problem to be discussed is clearly stated so that everyone understands it. What is it you are seeking to discover? Is it the attitudes youth should take toward war and the problems of peace? Is it how to carry on devotional practices when alone? Is it how to conduct a helpful recreation program for youth in the church? Is it how to win other young people to Christian commitments? It is readily seen how important it is to state the problem clearly that the group may avoid confusion and floundering! Then draw out as many suggestions as possible so that there will be several opinions for discussion.

Secure all the ideas possible from the youth themselves before the adult counselor begins to give his ideas. The counselor may need to begin with a suggestion or two to start the discussion. His suggestions should then stop until as many as possible have come from the young people themselves. Thus he does not discourage their thinking by providing most of the ideas himself. And thus the counselor often gains new ideas from the young people.

Be sure to lead the group to a definite decision. Sometimes the counselor may be able to bring the conference to an immediate decision, but on other occasions he may have to postpone it until a later meeting. He will have to be the judge as to when the time is ripe for the decision.

Help the young people work out ways to carry out their commitments. This often requires careful planning and suggestions from the counselor. Having led them to a decision, the counselor should assume responsibility for helping them carry it out. Help the young people grow by leading them to evaluate what they did and why they did it.

There are two dangers to be avoided: Do not let the young people come to a decision without adequately thinking the matter through. If they do not see what is involved the decision may prove unsatisfactory to them, or even harmful. If they see what is involved, however, the counselor should not try to keep them from making the decision which seems the right one to them, even though it may call for hard work and sacrifice. Do not let them fail to make a decision. Many a worthy undertaking with youth has failed because the counselor did not help the group reach a definite decision or commitment.

Thinking about lifework

Another approach which the minister can make in teaching religion to youth is deliberately to stimulate their thinking about their purpose or mission in life and their profession or occupation. In this field the minister should set himself to help young people *distinguish* between their mission and their profession. One's mission might be described as something to which one gives his energies, such as helping humanity, defending the rights of minority groups, helping the underprivileged get a fair chance, or building a healthier society. If he has any one of these missions he may make his profession contribute to it. It is the old question: For what do you strive in life? Youth need to be helped at this point. As one person said: "One should probably study his interests and capacities, select the profession or occupation in which he can be the happiest, and then work to carry out his mission through it."

Who is in a better position to help in this matter than the minister! He can do something to encourage youth through the pulpit, in baccalaureate or commencement day addresses, or on other occasions when he speaks to youth. He can also make it a part of his personal counseling program. In fact, many of his personal conferences with young people will be about this

very question of choosing their lifework. Youth want a challenge which will demand their best.

There is much to be done in this field. Reference has already been made to the scarcity of ministers. This demands that definite steps be taken to find ministers. One should be careful not to give the impression that only the ministerial profession opens the way for humanitarian expression. In fact, for many persons the ministry would not be a satisfactory profession. Nevertheless, recruits must be found for the ministry, and the pastor should speak of this profession to youths whom he believes would serve well in it.

Christian statesmanship is another field to which some youth should be directed. What a godsend to the nation and to the world if the church could send a thousand young men, with the Christian motive and objective uppermost in their lives, into political and diplomatic service! Here is undoubtedly one of the guarantees of lasting peace.

Of course, there are many other worthy callings. These two are mentioned especially because of the present great need. Here is a rich opportunity for the minister to teach religion to youth—and through youth.

Teaching by example

Perhaps the minister will teach as much religion to youth through his personality, by his manner of working with them and by being a pal to them, as in any other way. Thus, by being a genuine Christian gentleman with youth he opens the door for other contributions he can make.

Because a few ministers have greatly lessened their influence by their actions with young girls, this is mentioned in passing. It is not an unfamiliar sight at summer camps to see a minister walking arm in arm with teen age girls, with his arm around them, or swinging hands together. Ministers who make this mistake are probably only thoughtless, or do not realize the harm. In the mind of the minister this may be an

entirely innocent practice, but experience has clearly shown that it is an unwise one. Let the minister recognize and teach to others the charm and beauty of womanhood. Let ministers working with young people be sure their behavior is above reproach. Youth will welcome their help and will be more likely to accept their leadership if they refrain from acts of familiarity. Even though young people may not say anything, they have definite opinions of ministers who behave this way.

Guiding worthy projects

Another way by which the minister can teach religion to youth is to guide young persons in carrying on worthy projects, for which they have the major responsibility. Such projects will often grow out of a conversation with them. For instance, a minister was talking with his young people about the men in service. From this conversation came plans for systematic letter writing to service people. Again, a minister and his young people were discussing the health conditions in their town. As a result of this discussion a survey was made, pictures were taken of the neglected area, and a complaint was filed at the mayor's office which resulted in civic action.

Such projects are quite numerous throughout the church but their number should increase. They range from short-time projects in local communities to summer projects in work camps, where a small group of twelve to twenty young people give their summer to some constructive and much needed work in a rural or city situation.

Now someone asks: How does a minister teach religion through such a procedure? Just like this: Young people gladly launch upon a service *for others*. They carry much of the responsibility themselves. By so doing they experience the thrill of helping others and begin to understand the meaning of Christian service. When the project is carried on with others of their age they also learn the art of co-operation and co-

operative living. In fact, every worthy project provides an excellent means of *living one's religion.*

Providing opportunity for leadership

In teaching religion to youth the minister will see that they have an opportunity to learn Christian leadership in an organization of their own. When that organization incorporates all the groups of youth in the church—such as church school classes, youth fellowships, and missionary groups—greater are the possibilities for Christian growth and service and larger the numbers affected.

The minister who really wishes to influence others through the teaching of religion will give a great deal of attention to the youth of his church. Not only should he do so to afford them the companionship and help which they need, but also because in them lies the hope of the world and the future of the church. Let us challenge their best efforts, hold them to responsibilities which they should assume, and make them a vital part of church life. The minister will see that they are represented upon all program and official committees and boards of the church, bearing in mind that youth feel freer to participate if there are several of their age on such a committee. He will constantly keep in mind that his young people have personalities, ideas, desires, and are a real part of his congregation.

One of the ministers who read this manuscript wrote his experience in using young people on committees:

To the first meeting of the Crusade for Christ Council in my local church I invited four youths, and all came. Only half of the adults invited came. The meeting dragged, and the adults seemed lukewarm to the whole program and were especially skeptical about meeting our financial quota. The young people made suggestions about the rally program and mentioned a speaker they

had heard at the institute. They said they would like to hear him again and offered to help with the worship program for the evening, and with lunch. One boy said: "I don't know anything more important to spend our money for." Outside after the meeting the most skeptical adult was heard to say: "You know, I believe we can do it!" The church is "doing it" in a fine way. Within a month after that meeting the quota was subscribed. The convictions, enthusiasm, interest, and willingness of the young people furnished the needed spark.

And a certain ruler [*young man*] *asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* —Luke 18:18

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CHAPTER VII

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION TO ADULTS

THE PULPIT is usually considered as the minister's greatest opportunity to guide the religious life of adults. When one thinks of having before him for an hour or more, Sunday after Sunday, groups of people who are in a receptive mood, it is no wonder that the pulpit looms so large as a means of reaching adults. Chapter III deals specifically with this channel.

At the same time in the hundreds of daily contacts with adults, when they are less likely to be "on their guard," the minister also has an excellent opportunity to guide them in their religious living. Especially is this true when he meets them in experiences of sickness, birth, death, marriage, joy, success, grief, and failure. So in this chapter we will give special attention to these other ways in which the minister can teach religion to adults.

First, *what does the church try to do with adults?* No list of goals can be exhaustive, but I venture to suggest five. The church tries to:

1. Lead adults into an increasing appreciation of Christ, the Christian way, God, the Bible, and the meaning of an orderly, friendly world.

2. Help to fix firmly in their minds a Christian way of looking at life to help them meet adversities.

3. Build them into the community and church life, making them responsible participants in both the community and the church.

4. Help them have a home life which is altogether Christian.

5. Help them see the responsibility of using their talents, skills, and money intelligently and devotedly. Stewardship becomes a major objective with adults, but it should be preceded by step-by-step progress in the lives of the younger groups as a result of training.

Specific goals for the minister

Perhaps the minister should try to do *all* of this with adults. He will certainly endeavor to accomplish certain specific things. He will seek to awaken adults to the fact that *they can still grow*. Too many adults believe that they have *arrived*. They demonstrate this especially when working with youth. All too often they assume that they "know it all" and that youth know little. Some adults attend the worship service apparently not expecting anything to happen to them. They thrive on platitudes, and when the idea of putting a Christian emphasis on their manner of living is suggested, they make no attempt to change. The conversion of adults to a new idea, or to a different way of life, happens so seldom that when it does we talk about it for a long time. The adult often thinks that he cannot change. "Why worry about influencing him," some say. "You know you cannot change an adult."

Of course, both of these concepts are fallacies. Adults can grow, can learn, can change. Persons with God's help have often led them to do so. And Thorndike's studies [1] indicate that when adults are given a strong incentive, they make more rapid growth than younger persons.

What can the minister do to make adults realize this? First, he can become convinced of the fact himself, and then work under the spell of his conviction. He will have faith in the fact that they can. This will color all that he does. His preaching will take on a new earnestness, and he will not hesitate to put forth extra effort to reach them. He will never permit himself to say: "It is no use." He will study individual adults

[1] See *Adult Learning*, by Edward L. Thorndike.

in his membership and constituency, look for the points in their personalities where he can appeal to them, consider their needs, and plan his contacts with them to make his influence felt. He will sense a need, and stimulate their thinking and feeling to help them grow at the point of need. He will never propose ideas and actions for his own benefit, but for the welfare and growth of the person he seeks to help.

The minister will cause adults to face facts. They are prone to make decisions upon quick judgment and react emotionally without having thought through the consequences. They are too easily swayed by circumstances of the moment. They often do not know the facts and, what is more, they do not try to discover them. These persons who do all of their acting on an emotional basis are not stable. Adults need to have enough emotion stirred to move them to action, but that emotion should come *as the result* of facing facts. The minister, therefore, will bring facts to his adults in every way possible—in sermons, with charts, through stimulated reading, on the screen, through the bulletin—in any way he can find.

The minister will deliberately seek to arouse the emotions of adults over great causes. It is at this point that one finds the weaknesses of religious education during the past twenty-five years. For a long time there was such a strong reaction to the "whipped up" emotional experiences of the earlier days that leaders were afraid to make emotional appeals. Yet, the emotions are the "dynamo" of the human being. Adults need to be stirred—but stirred about *something worth while.*

Such concerns as one's own personal character, the welfare of one's family, racial justice, and world brotherhood should stir persons to action. "Which is the great commandment?" The disciple could as truly have asked: "Which is the greatest motivation for man's right action?" And Jesus could have answered: "Your eagerness to be in harmony with God, and the second is equal to it, your concern for your fellow men."

Concern means "feeling for." When a minister stirs adults

to improve their relationship with God and the welfare of their fellow men, religion is being taught. To do this, the minister will present causes vividly. He will not hesitate to call the people to decision and action when the time is ripe, and will watch for experiences in their lives which open the way for further guidance. This is evangelism of a high order. We need more of it!

The minister will teach religion to adults by helping them in their home life. This is such an important part of the minister's work in reaching adults and their children that a whole chapter is given to it. We merely mention it here to make the picture complete. (See Chapter VIII.)

The minister will teach religion to adults by helping them to have a clearer understanding of the scriptures. There is a dearth of knowledge at this point. Parents and leaders often bemoan the lack of this knowledge on the part of youth. It is equally true with adults. Even such a simple Bible drill as finding portions of the scripture, often considered childish, is welcomed by many adults. (See Chapter V.) The minister will see that Bible interpretations are broad enough to enable adults to draw their own conclusions. Although he will not hesitate to express his own interpretations, in all fairness to his people he will indicate different points of view and tell *why* others hold those views.

Helping persons think for themselves is one of the minister's heaviest responsibilities. Adults should be taught to make intelligent decisions. Their convictions should come as a result of careful thought. This is a part of becoming a mature Christian person. The minister should learn to respect the points of view of other adults, whether or not they are in accord with his own. To give adults only one's own convictions keeps the minister and his adults one-sided and prevents religious growth. It is the minister's opportunity to help adults see all sides of every question and the values of each. He thus will teach them to think for themselves and to stand on their own

feet. We need many adults who have the intelligence and courage to do that.

One should not conclude from these statements that the minister must refrain from expressing his own convictions. The opposite is true. After he has helped adults to see the many angles of an issue, he should not hesitate to tell them where he stands.

The minister will see that adults are given an opportunity for wholesome social life under church auspices. Recreation facilities should not be restricted to youth. Many adults hunger for a social life that sparkles with interest, and gives them relief from some of the drudgery of life, without injuring body or spirit. The minister does not need to provide this, but he should see that it is provided. By arranging for wholesome recreational life he helps Christ to bring life "to the full" to adults.

In one of the author's early pastorates a delightful valentine party was provided for the young people of a neglected community. Decorations, pictures, dinner, and fun made up the program. Because they seldom had affairs of this kind, the young people—and the adults as well—talked about it all over the community. The following week a farmer in his thirties said: "That was a fine program you gave to the young people. Why don't you help us adults to have one once in a while!"

The minister will bring comfort and joy to the adults of older years. The religious life of many of older persons is warped because they feel they are neglected, become disgruntled, and have little to anticipate. When their pastor brings them cheer and remembrances, and sees that other groups remember them, he is teaching religion to these older adults.

If the minister is in earnest about teaching religion to adults he will see that the young adults are included in his plans for older ones. These persons—twenty-five to forty years of age—

are often neglected by churches. Yet how much they need help. They are in the period of life when a home is being established, children are growing, financial plans are being worked out and church associations are being determined. The young adult needs much attention. Among this group are war brides, war widows, and returning servicemen and women, all of whom have special needs which the church should seek to meet. The brief bibliography at the end of this chapter includes some of the limited number of helps now available.

The minister will lead adults into a deeper appreciation of their church. Many have not been taught its ritual, its history, or its doctrine. They should be informed. They also need a place in the program of their church where they can serve.

The minister can guide adults into private devotional practices. Most of them have not been taught how to direct their thinking into devotional channels when they are relaxed and quiet. Here is a real need. The minister can come nearer to doing this than anyone else.

The minister will lead adults into a world-wide vision of Christianity. This is not a time for narrow sectarianism, any more than it is a time for narrow nationalism. The ecumenical movement is in the right direction. All adults need to know about it so they can support it. The reasons for the world fellowship program of the church should be brought to the attention of adults in every way possible. The minister who teaches religion to adults will make this one of the major objectives with his adult constituency. Missionary education will loom large in his thinking and plans.

Now, just how can the minister accomplish these things? Here again the size of his church and his own skills will be determining factors. However, he needs to bear in mind all of these *specific* objectives for his adults. He dare not let his own personal interest in any one field so monopolize his time that he forgets the others.

Reaching the adults

There are definite ways ministers have gone about this task of reaching their adults. A few are listed; the reader's own experience and imagination will suggest others to him.

1. Much of the pastor's preaching will be of an *educational character.* Through it he will try to enlighten his hearers. Not only will he use special sermon themes dealing with the above objectives, but he will watch for opportunities at other times to use illustrations that stress them. Recently, a fellow minister was giving a biblical interpretation and illustrated it with two or three stories from the mission field. "That was one of the best missionary sermons I ever heard," said one of his hearers afterward!

2. Pastoral calling will take on definite purpose. It will never become a chore, or cease to have meaning. The minister will be conscious that every contact is an opportunity to help an adult grow in the Christian way of life. A comment, a question, a commendation, said in the right way and at the right time, will stimulate the adult to think through his own ideas more carefully, or cause him to take hold of life with new courage, or turn to his daily tasks with more confidence.

3. Through the church school adult department, week night study groups, and women's and men's organizations, the minister has an opportunity to suggest *elective studies* which widen the horizons of adults.

In some churches the "learning for life school" idea has opened the way for new growth. The following is quoted from a statement setting forth the plan:

1. *The need* for adults to go to school in the local church: Too few adults are in the church school. Too many Christian adults are not in any study group. Too many unchurched adults are not being reached at all. Apparently many adults do not feel the need of the Uniform Lessons which are repeated every eight years and

which give an inadequate approach both to the Bible and to the various areas of living. Adults are not sufficiently informed or are not sensitive enough concerning the implications of Christian teachings for life situations, and thus too few adults stand for Christian principles and Christian convictions. It is to meet this need that the idea of the "learning for life school," sometimes called the "adult college in the local church," has emerged.

2. *Areas of living for special study*: In what kind of experiences do adults find themselves? About what are they concerned? A suggestive classification of vital areas would be—home and parenthood; business, profession or vocation; family budget and property; God, worship, prayer; interpretation of the Bible and how the Bible came to be; the church in our times; the church in history; recreation and leisure activities; personal devotional practices; citizenship within one's own community and nation; international relationships; Christian attitudes and philosophy; how to win others to Christ and the church; world outreach and missions. An intelligent and active Christian needs to have a *Christian concern* about the many problems in each of these areas.

3. *Teacher-specialists*: No one person should be expected to be expert as a teacher in all of the areas of human experience and knowledge. Yet the Uniform Lessons attempt to cover the whole range of religion and life, touching here and there. The teacher-need, therefore, is for persons who will specialize in one or more of these areas, who can then teach the same course to different groups or adult classes. A person without special training can in a short time of concentrated effort prepare himself along one special line, and can then lead other adults in very profitable study.

4. *Procedure in setting up the school*: To start such a school the church board of education, with the help of the council of adult leaders, should take the following steps:

a) Determine which courses to offer, and how many. Sometimes a check list is used to ascertain the areas in which adults are most interested. Such a check list may be made up of the fields of experience listed above.

b) Select prospective teachers weeks or months in advance. Each person so selected will prepare for the course as thoroughly

as possible—reading, making teaching plans—and will gather materials for use in the course.

c) Then promote the school throughout the entire parish or constituency, and enroll as many adults as possible for the various courses offered. This program reaches out far beyond the present enrollment in the adult department of the church school.

5. *Several churches of similar interests*: In a rural community where there are several churches close enough together, or in a city where there are likely to be two or more churches of the same general evangelical point of view, these teachers may be exchanged among the churches. Thus a 'traveling faculty' for adult classes and groups can be developed.

6. *Values*: These should be apparent at once. Persons are teaching in fields in which they are well prepared. Groups of adults who otherwise would not have such expert leadership may have it by borrowing a teacher from another group for a time. A wide variety of study is made possible. Many persons not now attending the adult class or classes of the church school will become interested, for among the studies they find those which deal more directly with their needs.

7. *Teachers for the "learning for life school"*: Pastors and other leaders should be alert to discover persons who are especially interested in one or more of these special areas, and who have the general background and ability to lead others in such a study. These persons should then be asked to become a part of the faculty, and to prepare in the field of their present interest and ability. Every community has one or more persons who can become prepared to teach.

The "learning for life school" idea is not new, but it is not universally used. Especially is this true in the Sunday morning program of adult classes. But many pastors are trying it, and with success. It is greatly needed as a means of putting new interest and vitality into the Sunday morning adult classes.

One small church with four adult classes offered four courses on Sunday morning. One of the courses was a study of the Uniform Lessons. The others were Life of Jesus, Teacher

Training, and World Peace. Not one adult chose the Uniform Lessons, each preferring to take one of the last three courses. A new spirit and interest was evident in the adult department. The plan can, of course, be used at other times than Sunday morning.

4. The minister will be alert for projects in which he can interest his adults and thus offer them avenues of growth through purposefully planned service. These opportunities are on every hand. Most communities provide the field for activity. Perhaps racial or other minority groups are being unjustly treated; perhaps children and youth lack play and recreation centers; church property may require repair, or a whole new church building or an educational unit may be needed; persons returning from war work or the armed service should have fellowship and help in readjustment to civilian life; moral and political issues in the community may demand attention; a nursery may be necessary during the hour of public worship; perhaps the community needs an evangelistic campaign. If one looks about him for a few weeks in any community he will find problems on which the adults should be centering their thought and action. The minister must become the spearhead in arousing the people to accomplish things. They grow religiously in doing so, when their purpose is Christian.

5. The minister can bring the leaders of all adult organizations in the church together in an adult council to study needs and plan programs for the *total adult membership and constituency*. This makes for efficiency and religious harmony. In this way also the *total needs* of the adult group are considered. When the women's organization, the men's brotherhood, the church school adult classes, the choir, and the "official" members of the church face together the adult needs, there can be a pooling of leadership and ideas that will greatly help in doing a job that needs to be done. Often the kingdom of God is delayed by the failure of well-meaning people to combine their efforts.

6. The minister can make his church bulletin or weekly paper, or a bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary or near the entrance, the medium in teaching religion to adults. These means can be used to spread ideas, to suggest prayers for personal or family use, and to call the attention of persons to needs in the church and community.

7. The minister can distribute Christian literature. The day of wholesome tracts is not past. Church periodicals and other religious magazines and journals can be introduced. Pamphlets and books dealing with the problems of adults can be circulated. If the minister's pocket or brief case carries such literature when he makes calls, he will have many opportunities to stimulate the thinking of his adults.

8. The minister can form small groups of adults to lead their thoughts and conversation into channels of devotional meaning. Strength for their own tasks will thus be given. Christian conversions can result. Small units of Christian-minded people can become the leaven in influencing the whole church.

9. The minister will constantly keep in mind that one of his objectives with adults is to further their devotion to God and his cause. Opportunity for devotional experiences will be sought. Business meetings, public services, committee meetings, the close of an evening of recreation, as well as the small devotional groups mentioned above, often will provide these opportunities. He will feel the evangelistic urge wherever he meets folks.

Remember that in all his efforts to teach religion to adults, the minister will keep alert to the *needs* of these adults and will use the means at hand to meet those needs. He will also bear in mind that as persons participate they grow and will act on that principle. As one person has stressed it: "One of the great needs of today is to *release* the abilities in others."

TO ADULTS

Adults are the minister's greatest opportunity to affect the total life of the church. They are the ones in control. Other groups need his attention, but if he does not reach and train the adults effectively for Christ and the Kingdom, he soon loses out at all points. Without neglecting young people, more thought must be given to adult groups and their religious growth.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them. —Matt. 5:1-2

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CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION THROUGH THE HOME

A NEW APPRECIATION of the importance of the home in society is emerging. More and more, public school, community, and church leaders are sensing that, after all, their part is not to take the place of the home but to supplement what the parents should be doing. The family is the basic unit of democratic society. When Jesus sought to describe God he turned to the home for the term "father." He described the kingdom of God as a state of affairs where all men are brothers, all sons of the same Heavenly Father.

The church and the home

All too frequently the church in its relation to the home has concentrated on attempting *to interest the home in the church.* This is a worthy objective. But of more importance is the goal of *influencing the home, of making the church serve the home,* helping it to be the center of godlike living and teaching. "Parents are teachers, too." When the church helps parents and parents-to-be to sense their responsibility as teachers of Christian principles, it is not only touching all ages now but is reaching generations to come. The home is the place where guidance can best be given to all ages in the practice of Christian living.

The church has not given enough attention to the family as a unit, both at home and in the church. Someone has said: "Christian education, through its departmental program, has divided the family and has put little in its program to weld

the family as a unit." This is no plea to eliminate a departmental program; it is a plea for the opposite—a departmental program so rich that when the family members come together either in the church or in the home they have something to share. The church must provide more times on Sunday and through the week when the *family as a unit* enters into a sharing experience. Most families are used to having sharing experiences at mealtime. In small churches the family often attends as a unit. This is one of the several advantages of the small church. These families are ready to enter into whatever sharing experiences the church may provide.

If one were to state briefly what the church should try to do with families and the home, he could probably organize it around two ideas: (1) Enrich the life of *each member* of the family and help him feel the unity of his group in the church. (2) Give help to the family in co-operating with God as he seeks to build a bit of heaven in every home.

Some of the specific needs of the home to which the church will give attention are:

1. A sense of the importance of the family and the home. Many aspects of our modern life tend to destroy family unity.
2. An insight into what constitutes a Christian home.
3. An understanding of the ways and means of family devotional practices. Help is especially needed where there are young children.
4. An understanding of how to develop co-operation, a sense of responsibility, and a mutual regard among family members.
5. A means of maintaining a program of family fun.
6. A consciousness of the presence of the Spirit of God within the family circle.

The minister will, of course, strive to make his church function in accomplishing these goals for the family and home. There are, moreover, some definite things which the minister

can do. These will become *his* specific undertakings for the benefit of the families and homes within his parish.

The minister's contacts with the home

In his personal contacts with the homes the minister will endeavor to make a real impact upon them. He should get acquainted with *all* members of the family. The children are as much entitled to know a fine personality, exemplified in their minister, as their parents. The father or mother who may attend church irregularly needs that contact whether he or she senses it or not.

He should help the family face trying times brought on by sorrow, financial reverses, or other causes, showing them that the church cares about them as much as the church wants them to care for it. "You are the first minister to call in my home since we were married," said a mother of three small children. "You are the first minister to call in five years," said another. People do not like to admit it, but they are often hungry for the association with one who has strong spiritual sense and power.

He should introduce the family devotion idea. One pastor took an official member with him to call in homes to introduce a devotional manual to the families of his church. While there they gave guidance in how to use the manual and urged the family to follow a regular devotional practice.

He should keep before the children and parents the denominational schools and colleges, so that when the children grow older their church college will have a chance when a choice is made. One minister practiced saying to the small children in the homes he visited: "When you grow up you are going to 'our' college, aren't you?" And many of them grew up to do just that!

He should introduce the observance of great religious festivals in the home. Families need counsel in *how* to observe them. One family follows a practice each Christmas of having

a family candle. It is lighted with a Christian ceremony on Christmas Eve, allowed to burn all day Christmas, and is blown out Christmas night after the family have had a devotional service together. Another family plans a fine Christian ceremony around the lighting of the Christmas tree. Many families observe birthdays, but do they bring in something of the Christian significance of the occasion—the stewardship of one's years, and the importance of using one's time well? Children will remember these home festivals all their lives and will carry on some of them as traditions in their own homes.

The minister should prepare families for crises that may come, such as an imminent death, or the leaving home of an only child. One pastor reports that a mother came to him much disturbed. Her only daughter was to marry and leave home and the mother had just realized that the daughter's going would leave her alone. She was in great distress. Her former pastors might have saved her this anguish had they been alert in helping her to anticipate this experience.

He should help parents and children in parent-child relationships. This is crucial. Often a pastor can give guidance or suggest reading that will aid in a difficult situation of this kind. Such books and pamphlets as *The Child's Approach to Religion,* by Henry Watson Fox; *Growing Up,* by Karl de Schweinitz; *Teaching a Little Child to Pray,* by Jennie Lou Milton; and *Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls,* published by the Connecticut Council of Christian Education, are excellent to place in the hands of parents.

The minister should help parents to establish a budget plan, for the proper handling of income is important to happy Christian home life.

He should help work out adjustments between estranged couples that will make for their happiness and reconciliation.

He should deliver the baptismal certificate to the home after the christening of a child. This affords an opportunity to talk with the parents and give further counsel.

He should be a source of comfort to the aged and sick.

Last, but by no means least, the minister should teach religion through the home by praying with the family. Some ministers emphasize the need for tact in this matter. Perhaps this is well. But it is better to err in praying when prayer is not wanted than to fail to pray when people want it. In so many families there is no one who knows how to pray. A prayer by one who does know how brings a new sense of security into the home. Young ministers will do well to practice praying in the homes. They will come to recognize those homes where prayers are not welcome.

Contacts with newlyweds

In his contacts with those about to be married or with newlyweds, the minister can emphasize the importance of the home. For instance, he can work diligently to make the wedding a very impressive service. Thus, the religious significance of the home is enhanced. He can counsel with those he is about to marry, or has just married, on marital matters pertaining to money, sex relationships, regard for each other's personality, and mutual sharing. He can help them to have a Christian attitude toward the bearing of children and a sense of responsibility for their Christian training after they come. He can see that his church has the more expensive items in the wedding service equipment, such as candelabra and silk pillows, and thus make it unnecessary for persons to rent them. He can call early at the home of newlyweds to let them know the church is interested in them; and if they move to another parish he can inform his fellow minister of their coming.

The church program

Through the program of his church the minister can indirectly teach religion in the home. Through his adult council [1]

[1] This adult council should have representatives from all adult groups in the church, such as adult church school classes, women's society, and men's brotherhood.

—or a special committee studying the home and family—he can also provide education in Christian home life. As a part of such a program the minister can have a one to two months' emphasis upon the family and home, during which time he will use this theme in his preaching, in special studies in church school and other classes, and in the selection of pamphlets and books for the literature table. Family Sundays, when the whole family comes to the public worship, can be promoted.

During this kind of emphasis one minister preached each Sunday morning during one month a sermon on the home, considering its place in society and how it could further the Christian ideals. In the Sunday evening services during the same period he directed his sermons to young people anticipating a home of their own.

A literature table, neatly displaying a special collection of books and pamphlets on home life and parents' responsibilities, has been the means of distributing many books and other pieces of literature to parents and others.

A recent visit of the author to a small rural church permitted participation in a "family day" plan, which that church observes one Sunday every month. Older children from the church school were the choir, and the sermon centered on family life. Family communion days are also a means of linking the church with the home. Some churches make much of the family pew idea. One church recognizes each newborn baby in the parish by placing a single rose on the altar the Sunday following his birth.

One church in a larger community, in co-operation with other churches in the community, held a great mass meeting on child delinquency. Parents were urged to save one night a week for companionship with their children and many agreed to do so.

The family can be the center of much more attention in the church. A Lenten program carried out by one church included a series of neighborhood family gatherings, in a

different neighborhood each night. Problems of home life were discussed, stereopticon pictures were shown on "The Romance of the Christian Home," and devotional literature was distributed. The minister guided the evening plans and assumed some leadership in the project. Thus, parents who were not otherwise reached through the regular church gatherings were influenced through these neighborhood meetings. "Going to the people" must become more and more our practice if we are to make a contribution to the home life of our constituency.

One minister led a group of married couples in a series of Sunday night gatherings in their homes. After enjoying a potluck supper, the group had time for fellowship, serious discussion, and closing worship. Discussions centered around how to observe special days in the home, ways of having family devotions, meeting the liquor problem with youth, recreation in the home, a reading program for the home, and the selection of toys for children.

The minister teaches religion through the homes in his parish. He also teaches religion *through his own home*. Here, if anywhere, there should be a minimum of unkind words, a maximum of respect for personality, a warmth of hospitality, and a demonstration of democracy. By making his home genuinely Christian the minister not only teaches religion to his own family but sets an example for his whole parish.

If the minister would teach religion, let him consider the homes of his people!

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. —Luke 10: 38-39

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CHAPTER IX

THE MINISTER TEACHES RELIGION THROUGH OTHERS

A MINISTER can easily assume that one of his greatest channels for teaching religion is through his own personal contacts. While this is very true, he needs also to realize that some of his best opportunities to teach religion come through others in his church and community.

Jesus' own contacts with people were, comparatively speaking, limited in number, both in the contacts he made with any given person and in the number of persons he reached. But those contacts were so forceful that through them he has influenced the world as no other person has done.

This art of working through other people is a very desirable one, and one that every minister needs to acquire and practice. To follow such a course will bring him many fine opportunities for teaching religion.

Church groups to be utilized

First, there is his official leadership—the sessions, official board, elders, or whatever they are called in his communion. These persons usually include some of the most intelligent and influential persons in the community, some of the most devoted to the church and Christ's cause. All together they daily touch lives by the hundreds while the minister alone touches them by tens.

My father and mother were both active in the church and sought to live Christian lives. Father was a merchant. Many people came to his store daily. I often noticed the effects of

his minister's teachings and influence in my father's business dealings. How many times in the course of the church's work the goals set for the year were more nearly reached because the minister had successfully worked through my parents and other people!

Then, the minister has his choir. Each Sunday they are in his service of worship, either helping or hindering the service, according to their training or lack of it. Through them worshipful attitudes can be exemplified, and enriched meaning put into the worship experience. The women's society is a strong group in many churches. They have power for righteousness if it is properly directed and motivated. Through them the minister can teach religion to nearly all the women in his constituency. The youth organization, the men's brotherhood, the adult classes in the church school—all of these groups are chanels through which the minister can teach religion.

Perhaps his most promising group are teachers in the church school. Each of these persons touches from four to fifty or more others as the case may be. They are teaching directly. They should have definite goals for which they are working. The minister who seeks earnestly to teach religion will give much more time to this group than is often done. (See Chapter X.)

There are also small informal groups who come together because of some common interest—perhaps a group interested in a scientific study of the Bible, or the question of peace and Christian pacifism, or a study of the economic order in the light of Christian teachings, or personal religious living, or furthering Christian interracial experiences in the community. These small groups often become exceedingly influential in promoting religious living in the whole congregation or community. They become, as it were, leavens.

Sometimes a minister selects a program committee responsible to the official board or sessions, with whom he talks over

all important questions before presenting them to the larger groups. On this committee is a representative of each organization within his church. Here, too, are people through whom the pastor can work.

Standing committees are excellent opportunities to teach religion through others. Too often such committees are appointed and then given no guidance in their functions. Close contact with these groups on the part of the minister will further his influence. The growth that takes place in the members when they work intelligently should not be minimized as the minister evalutes the results of his efforts.

A few churches have divided their congregation into commissions. Each commission studies some phase of the church's work—worship, education, recruiting, personal evangelism, missionary service, the recreation program. The membership of each commission is determined largely by the interest of the individuals. These commissions are study groups, not official groups. From them come suggestions to the official board or the board of education for further study and official action in the light of the whole church program. This procedure needs careful organization and adequate leadership, but it gives the democratic process a chance to work. It has tremendous power for teaching all the membership, and for enlisting them in an active program.

When the minister is thinking of his educational program, there is one person who holds a strategic position and through whom he can accomplish much. That person is the church school superintendent. Fortunate is the pastor who has an intelligent and devoted church school superintendent. But regardless of his preparation and ability—or lack of it—the pastor needs to give him considerable guidance.

Teaching through church groups

What can the minister do to teach religion through these groups in his church? What principles can he follow that will

help him to do more effective work through these channels?

He can make sure that they know and understand the goals for which he and his church are working. This is an educational task in itself. How important that time be given to the "official" members to help them think through what the church stands for and what it strives to do. Some ministers plan a series of brief discussions with their official leadership on the goals of the church, its tenets, its history, and its organization. Others meet with their choirs regularly to interpret the content of the worship services and how choir members can contribute to them. It would be a fine idea to have a school of worship for the choir. The same care is needed in interpreting goals to the woman's organization, the church school teachers and others. Many mistakes and misunderstandings can be prevented if the minister sees that this interpreting is done.

The minister needs to develop friendships with his workers, not of the sentimental or overattentive type, but true friendships. He should avoid favoritism and overfamiliarity.

Another principle the minister will follow is to encourage his workers *to make their own contribution in thought and plans* to the work of the church. Many times they will suggest the very ideas he himself has in mind. He is eager for their growth, so he seeks to bring out *their* ideas before he reveals his own. This is very important. It is absolutely essential if the minister is to work through them. He will use these workers at every opportunity, often sitting on the sidelines while they take the reins. His relationship to them is much that of the adult teaching a child to drive a team of horses. The child is given the reins, but the adult holds on to the buckled end. He is ready to give help and guidance where and when needed by taking up the slack and keeping the horses headed in the right direction.

This same principle should often be followed by the members of the minister's family. Recently the author attended a

morning worship service where the pastor's wife sang in the choir. It happens that she has a beautiful singing voice and considerable skill in directing choirs, but she remains a member of the choir while another person, less efficient than she, directs it. Sometimes there is good reason for the minister or the members of his family to take the lead in a given project, but if the minister hopes to guide the members of his church he must use them. He will recognize and show appreciation for good work when it is done and thereby will encourage the person to continue to grow!

The pastor will also spend time—often in groups, but individually as well—in guiding persons to acquire the skills they need—in carrying out their church activities. This will not only assure a more successful result, but will prevent many serious mistakes and frustrations which often discourage people from making further attempts. When we ask someone to do a task we are obligated to see that he has our help in the undertaking. The minister can often provide this guidance indirectly through such means as a leaders' library in the church and training classes and conferences. He will encourage his workers to attend the training opportunities that are available and will help them to do so.

Working with the church school

What is the pastor's greatest opportunity in his church school? That depends upon his own training and abilities, but his greatest opportunity is often found right at this point of working through others. If he will acquire the skill of supervising his teaching staff he can do much to improve the quality of their work. When a teacher understands that the pastor is not trying to find fault but to help, his presence will be welcomed during the teaching periods. By following this with friendly and sympathetic conferences, much progress can be made.

There are at least three steps which the minister should

take in supervising the work of his teachers: (1) He should talk with the teacher, discussing what he is trying to do as a teacher, why he is doing it, and what he hopes to achieve. (2) He should sympathetically observe the work, making mental notes of things done and of matters which he wishes to talk over afterward. Sometimes he can make penciled notes without causing embarrassment. In this case, it is even a good plan to write down verbatim some of the things said—phrases and vocabulary used. Then he has it in black and white to discuss afterward. (3) He should see that the observation is followed by a conference. It should be long enough to tackle any problems that need to be considered, and enough time should elapse after the observation to permit both to look at it objectively.

Of course, the attitude of the minister as he observes and talks with the teacher will do much to gain the desired cooperation. There is probably no better or more effective way of helping a person to improve his skills than to guide him as he actually works.

Ministers in large churches usually feel that supervision of church school teachers should be carried on by someone else, and they are probably right. There are thousands of ministers, however, in small and medium-sized churches who—if they are not serving a circuit—could do this. On a circuit, a minister must depend upon his weekday contacts to help his leaders. To be absent from the Sunday session of the church school is a handicap to the minister in guiding his teachers, but does not make it impossible for him to help them.

Some of the points at which the minister can help his teaching force are in their inadequate concepts of God, Jesus, the church, the kingdom of God, and salvation. He can help them with the prayers they use with children. Through biblical interpretations he can give them a clearer understanding of some of the major social issues. He can guide them in their method of teaching, and in the vocabulary they use with children of

various ages. He can help the teachers lead their children and youth to the place where they arrive at religious concepts and ideas that are *meaningful* to them. There is a tendency on the part of many teachers to indoctrinate their pupils, using words which mean little or nothing to the children, although they may have meant much to adults and to the teachers themselves.

Utilizing the talents of church members

In all that the minister does to work through others he should not neglect two things of very great significance. He should find out *what his people can do efficiently* and then *place them in positions in the church where they can do their best work*. A survey of leadership skills and talents often secures this information. Some ministers have used a survey blank such as this:

Name..... Date.....
Address..... Phone.....
What tasks do you now have in this church?.....
.....
How long have you been a member of this church?.....
What did you do in the church from which you came?.....
.....
What offices do you hold in other organizations?.....
.....
What other offices have you held in the past?.....
.....

Underline the activities and subjects in which you are interested: Work with nursery at church service, church school nursery, beginners, primary, juniors, intermediates, high school, college, young adults, older adults; administration, alcohol education, vacation church school, worship, missionary education, Bible interpretation, Christian economics, world peace, world relationships, family problems, home religion, sex education, basic Christian beliefs, hymnody, drama, picture interpretation, singing, instrumental mu-

sic (kind.....); chorus, children's choirs, visiting in hospitals, visiting shut-ins, visiting newcomers, financial soliciting, creative art, recreation, counseling, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, motion pictures, choral reading, nature study, stenography, cooking, waiting on table, publicity, hiking, woodcraft, soap carving, folk games, folk songs, puppets, photography, drawing, poster making, blueprinting, weaving, metalcraft, courtesy committee, sharing car for church purposes.

Draw a circle around those in which you can lead others.

I can, and will if asked, give time to helping others with the following: .....

State on the reverse side of this sheet your experience and training in these.

I would be willing to serve on a committee to.....

I would like to join others in learning about.....

.....

Some ministers include every person in the church of high school age and above in this survey. Once the survey is made, the minister can classify the returns. Better still, let him delegate a committee to do the classifying. A card index, grouping persons according to their interests and skills, makes a ready reference for the pastor or a committee when leaders are needed. Incidentally, the above questionnaire will also include the names of those who would like to study some special field of service. Those interested can form a study group.

Another time the leadership survey can be used is when persons join the church. As they pledge their time, talents, and money to help in the work of the kingdom, the questionnaire becomes a guide for the pastor in placing them in fields where they can at once begin to serve. Thus, he has both a means of enlisting his membership in Christian service and another channel for teaching religion through others.

The second item of considerable importance is to provide

for his leaders some great experiences of worship. Business meetings are often bare of this element. All too frequently someone is called on to pray at the opening of such a meeting, and the assumption is that everyone present has thereby had a worship experience. How much more meaningful it would be for the minister to close the business session with a quiet time when a short scripture, a bit of prose, a poem, or some personal experience was read or told. Then, in quiet prayer let each person feel the awareness of God's presence and the demands God makes upon us to live and work as Christians. People are starving for the devotional emphasis. They need it in order to live. There is great danger that the many organizational demands of the church will crowd out these times when leaders *feel* their religion. We count on these persons to lead others *in religion*. Let us, as ministers, be sure that *we lead them* in experiences in which they *feel* their religion. Every time a group assembles to consider God's business, they should hold a short service of dedication and consecration.

The minister *can* teach religion through others, and by so doing he increases his influence manyfold.

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

—Matt. 13:33

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CHAPTER X

THE MINISTER HELPS HIS TEACHERS TEACH RELIGION

"If I could only help my teachers to be more effective!" has been the yearning prayer of many a minister. Knowing that the teachers in his church school reach a large number of persons of all ages, he is quite aware of their potential power. Although he may induce them to attend conferences, or may be influential in setting up training classes for them, probably the most effective help he can provide for them is guidance in preparation for teaching. To teach a class or direct a department is often their most urgent responsibility in the church. They sense the opportunity that is theirs. Most church school teachers known to the writer are eager for help at this very point.

Meeting with the teachers

Some readers can remember the days when the minister met weekly with all his teachers and went through the lesson with them. It was the regular Wednesday or Thursday night teachers' prayer meeting. That was when all classes in the church school used Uniform Lessons. But Uniform Lessons are not used in the more carefully planned schools today. Some form of graded lesson materials—at least for children and youth—has been adopted. When we began to think in terms of the pupils and furnished a variety of lesson materials more nearly suited to each age, we became less thoughtful of the teacher and did not provide anything to take the place of these weekly teachers' meetings. At the same time, teaching

methods have changed. This has made the task of the volunteer teacher increasingly difficult.

To meet this need on the part of teachers, some ministers have adopted a plan of guidance on a unit basis. The minister, or someone else whom he designates, meets with the teachers of one department two or three weeks before the unit begins. The teaching materials are spread out on the table around which the teachers gather. Each teacher has the pupil's material, the teacher's journal, and his own Bible.

Numerous questions are then raised, one at a time—questions that cause the teachers to consider their materials, the needs of their group, and plans for teaching procedure. The following questions have been used many times, and will be found practical and satisfactory with teachers of all departments—beginner or kindergarten through adult. They are taken from a leaflet, *Teachers Can Learn to Teach Effectively,* which the writer prepared for his own denominational publishing house, and are used with permission. [1]

1. *What is the subject of the next unit of study?* A unit is composed of materials for a series of sessions, all centering on one major theme or experience, and planned with one general purpose. It may be a unit of five Sundays on the life of Jesus; or it may be planned for two or more Sundays and center upon world peace, alcohol education, prayer, play in the home, or one of many other experiences. One quarter's work may be divided into several units. A list of all the units for a year for any age group may be secured free from the publishers of one's denomination.

2. *What is the major purpose of this unit?* What can I hope to accomplish in the lives of the persons in my class through the experience dealt with in this unit? What can I seek to accomplish that fits the age I am teaching? Each unit has a

[1] Available from the Editorial Division, Board of Education of the Methodist Church.

purpose. For instance, the purpose of a unit dealing with "God in Nature" might be "To learn to know God as Creator, to discover his laws in nature and how we can co-operate with them." There needs to be a specific objective for each session also. To illustrate, for the first session on this unit about God in nature, the objective might be to "discover how the beautiful things about us came to be." Each specific objective should lead to the major purpose for the whole unit. All good teachers' materials suggest objectives. If the ones suggested do not fit your group, then you must select some of your own. Here you will need to think long, hard, and often about how your pupils feel, what they desire, what they know, what habits they have, and what you want them to become.

3. *What materials do I have that the pupils and I can use in studying this unit?* What problems are raised, what questions suggested for discussion, what pictures, poems, prayers, stories, Bible references, hymns, and suggestions for activities are available? These are suggested in both the teacher and pupil material.

4. *What activities will I lead my group to carry out?* What activities in the class? What activities outside of class? We learn most through what we do, when there is a purpose for activity. Activities are many. Activities give varied ways of learning. Here are a few: thinking through questions; writing reporting; answering questions; checking lists; reading; hunting for information from persons or in books, magazines, and newspapers; acts of service for others; planning projects; worshiping; praying; standing up for one's convictions.

This fourth question is often the hardest to answer, but the most important.

5. *How will I begin each session where my pupils are and secure their interest immediately?* Many teaching sessions are successful because of what happens in the first five minutes. On the other hand, many sessions are a failure because in-

terest is not secured immediately. The teacher's helps will give suggestions. Remember, no suggestions are given in good teaching materials which have not been tried. Select the plan for beginning which you can best use. Do not always use the same plan.

6. *How will I proceed in the session?* When will I use the story? Picture? Questions? When will I have the pupils carry out certain activities? The important matter here is not at what minute by the clock you will do this or that, but *where* in the psychological or learning procedure of the group will you use any given plan. Things the members of the class do or say make it necessary for you to change your plan. Do not let this worry you. You will be better prepared to meet the emergency in the class if you plan a procedure, even though the plan is greatly changed in the actual teaching situation.

7. *What definite decisions or commitments do I hope the pupils will make?* Decisions will not necessarily come every Sunday. Perhaps there will be none until the end of the unit. But if character is to be developed consciously by the pupil, decisions must be a part of the process. You can afford to give much time to planning this part. Remember, to be effective the decisions must be specific. Many specific decisions over a number of years should eventually lead to great general decisions. (Some ministers have wondered about the evangelistic spirit in Christian teaching. When we lead persons to make specific decisions and then help them to carry out those decisions, we are bringing our evangelistic efforts to a head.)

8. *What can I do as a leader to help the members of my class carry out their decisions?* See suggestions in your materials. Some of the activities suggested are to follow up on decisions made. Note which ones will best help to do this. The one who leads the pupil to make a decision has a responsibility to help him carry it through in actual living.

9. *What method can I use to check on results?* There are

several ways—by observing one's pupils out of class as well as in class; by giving examinations and tests; and by having conversations with parents. These are only a few of many ways to check on one's work. By such means the teacher will see where his or her work needs to be improved. These means will also give the teacher occasion for rejoicing.

This plan to help teachers prepare for their classwork may be used whether they teach young or old. But the age, experience, likes and dislikes, knowledge, and ability of the group to be taught must always be kept in mind by the minister and the teacher.

After the minister works with a group for a while he will find that they need his help less and less. Gradually the teachers will acquire a plan of study which they will follow. When the minister feels that they have a method of work, he should encourage them to meet as a group alone. Such a plan of study is one of the great needs of every teacher.

Working with departmental groups

Since the plan calls for a study of the lesson materials, the minister or other leader will do well to work with one departmental group—or grade if using Closely Graded Lessons—for a quarter, take a second departmental group another quarter, another the third quarter, and devote the fourth quarter to a meeting with each of the three groups. After he has worked with a group one quarter and then started working with a second, it might be helpful to meet once during the second quarter with the first group.

Learning materials and techniques

Although the minister himself should not lead the teachers in this study if he can find some other capable person to do so, in many situations he will be the only one who *can* do it. And he can acquire additional knowledge and skill in his work

with the teachers. If he cares to do so, he can study the units in the curriculum of the several departments, and in a comparatively short time can become well acquainted with the content of the lesson materials. After following such a plan for a time his task will become less and less difficult. It is strongly recommended that young ministers begin early and grow in their skill in teacher supervision as they grow in experience. Christian education in its broadest concept is an effective means of influencing people. The church school teachers can become the most effective and far-reaching group in the local church. The guidance of these teachers is, therefore, a worthy undertaking on the part of the minister. A fine resource for the minister in this matter is *Modern Practices in the Elementary School,* by Hockett and Jacobsen. The Closely Graded Lessons of the various denominations also are suggestive as to the newer teaching procedures and will help the minister become more efficient in understanding those procedures.

Finding time

Some ministers will ask, Where will I find the time? or, How can I get teachers to give time for this? The answer to the second question is easier than the question seems to imply. Experience has revealed that *when the teacher discovers* that such a meeting once or twice a quarter actually saves time in preparation, makes teaching more effective, and results in greater satisfaction in the work done, because the pupils truly grow in their religious knowledge, attitudes and practices, he is willing to find time. In one case, after the minister had followed such a plan for a year, the teachers *demanded* that he continue to help them in this way. Some ministers begin with personal conferences with one or two teachers who are willing to be guided. Effective results cause others to ask for the same help.

The answer to the first question is more difficult. If we are realistic, however, we know that a minister—like everyone else—finds time to do what he considers the important things. Once he senses the value of such a procedure he makes a place for it. And when he sees the evangelistic opportunities the process provides he will feel compelled to follow such a plan to help his teachers teach religion. Some of the busiest ministers do carry on such a practice with their teachers. The larger churches which employ directors of Christian education naturally expect that person to assume this kind of responsibility, but a very small number of churches are in that class.

Getting started

How to start may be a problem for some pastors. One minister outlined the plan in a conference with his teachers and indicated what he was prepared to do. He then offered his services to one department only—any one in which the teachers wanted such help. One department responded. As a result of his work other departments requested similar help.

If a teacher of fifteen boys and girls so improves her teaching through such a plan that her pupils are won to Christ, to his way, and to the church, the time given to such guidance can be considered profitably spent. Some ministers will shy clear of such a procedure for fear their abilities cannot satisfy the demands of their teachers. In many cases this fear is not justified. Before giving up the idea entirely, one should look among the more successful public school teachers in his community to find a leader to help his teachers.

There is no speedier or surer way to train teachers than to put the "tools of their trade" in their hands and guide them in the use of them.

Leadership training courses

The minister can also make fine use of the many leadership training courses that are now available. Some are short courses

of five or six sessions, while others run to ten or twelve sessions. The many ways in which these courses have been given —once or twice a week, at the church school hour, or one or two sessions each night of the week for a full week—make them a real resource for the minister in giving his teachers help in teaching religion. All of the books available for these courses make excellent numbers for the church school teachers' library.

Very often when the minister is giving guidance in the preparation of teaching plans, teachers will raise questions which open the way beautifully to introduce one of the leadership training courses.

Strengthening teacher morale

Much space has been given here to steps in helping teachers with their teaching plans. It is vital. There are also other ways in which the pastor can strengthen the morale and the work of his teaching staff. Let him see that workers' conferences are held regularly, with programs that are truly helpful. He can lead his teachers to sign a contract to be punctual and regular in attendance, and to keep themselves in the spiritual condition needed for good Christian teaching. Consecration services for his teachers should be held annually in the public worship service. The church people should be helped to sense the responsibility the teachers carry, and to appreciate the work they do and the devotion good teaching demands.

Ministers must give more attention to the teaching force in their churches, for in the teachers is the power to build the Christian church and Christian community of the future.

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two. . . . And they went out, and preached that men should repent. —Mark 6:7*a*, 12

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CHAPTER XI

THE MINISTER ENLISTS THE COMMUNITY TO TEACH RELIGION

THERE ARE TWO great influential institutions in American life —the home and the community. The school and church, as well as other welfare agencies, exist, in part, as supplementary units to the home and the community. What they do to change the homes and the community influences almost every person, for everyone is a part of some kind of home and a part of the community in which he lives.

The community is a unit of life in America. We band ourselves together in communities for security, for purposes of food storage and distribution, fire protection, school systems, conveniences to churches, libraries, water supply, police protection, doctors and hospitals, and all the other needs of human beings. One is made conscious of this power of the community to draw people together as he crosses the prairies of the middle west. For miles he rides without seeing a house. Then, all at once, there looms up on the horizon a town or village. Here people are clustered together, each in his own home but close enough to others for mutual aid and fellowship.

This very proximity of living provides the center for the tares to grow as well as the wheat. While integrity, fellowship, helpfulness, are being developed by people living close together, so also is rowdyism, thievery, gambling, drunkenness, and every other kind of evil. Persons with strength of character seem to permit religion, lodges, school districts, and politics to divide them, while the forces of evil lose no time in or-

ganizing. The latter have to, to live. The former *need* to, to overcome the evil.

What, then, can the minister do to make fellow citizens his allies in his attempts to teach righteousness, integrity, and good will, the very things for which his religion stands?

Studying the community

First, he can take account of the forces at work in the community, and the leadership that seems to have the greater influence. These he will study. How do they function? What are their motives? If bad, why are they permitted to continue in power? If good, what can he do to help support their endeavors? Sometimes a community has no such leadership, but the people are eager to do something constructive. They usually do not know how. This is the minister's opportunity and he will recognize it as his responsibility. This does not mean that he will run all the errands in the community. Neither will he do what he can lead others to do. It does mean that he will seek to extend the radius of his influence beyond his church. It means that if no other leader is available for a given task he will not hesitate to assume it himself, if the opportunity arises. On the other hand, his help may be most effective in guiding another person to take the lead in community enterprises.

Co-operating with worthy organizations

Second, he can recognize the good influence in such organizations as the 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and public school. These organizations have high ideals and work toward strong character goals. The minister can help his church people understand these organizations, how their goals relate to the goals of the church, and how, working together, they can help each other. Loyalty to his church will not prevent him from becoming well enough acquainted with these other agencies to discover both their strong and

weak points. Hartshorne and May, in *Studies in Deceit,* give these organizations a very good rating. The 4-H Clubs, for example, rank high in teaching honesty. This is understandable when one realizes the value of keeping boys and girls interested in projects that are related to their daily living. This is the program of the 4-H Clubs. The minister can also help bring the religious element and an appreciation for various religions and denominations into the programs of these organizations.

The minister can help the various character-building and welfare agencies work together. There should be no time for jealousies, backbiting, or unkind talk of other churches or agencies. Each has its contribution to make, and in the midst of it all the church has her part to play.

Standing for convictions

Third, the minister can stand firmly for his convictions. He has convictions and should know why he has them. This is not an easy thing for the minister to do. He does not always know when it is time to speak out, when to remain silent. He needs to remember, however, that there may be many in the community who are waiting for the leader who is not afraid to express his convictions. These persons will often give him support, once they know where he stands. Yet, at the risk of no support, he is often justified in expressing his opinion. It may be that his voice is the very one the community needs to hear.

Setting standards

The church can encourage all good things, discourage all bad things. The church can point out evils and challenge the community to do something about them. The church can help set standards of community action. The church can help the community center on projects that are vital to life. The church can help these organizations and the community to be

God-conscious. In some communities the church can take the lead in welfare projects, in developing a co-operative council of these agencies, and can sometimes give guidance in accomplishing what needs to be done.

Facing common problems

These institutions and organizations—churches, agencies, schools—face common problems: delinquency of youth and parents, crowded time schedules, depleted leadership, parental indifference, the widespread use of liquor, uncurbed gambling, and the child or youth who is not being reached by any church or welfare agency. Only by the combined resources of these forces for good can we hope to prevent the breakdown of civilization. The deterioration which has already set in, in many communities, is appalling. It is time for action—determined action in the right direction!

Someone who forgot to sign his name has said: "You can get almost anything done, if you do not care who gets the credit!" The minister who is determined that his life shall count in the teaching of religion will not let this opportunity slip by. The contagion of a fine spirit is tremendous. It is easier to establish such leadership in medium-sized towns and communities, and often the results are far-reaching.

The writer knows of a community enterprise in a small city of 75,000 population that exerted wide influence because a minister who cared what happened had the patience and insight to bring it about. Another community put 18,000 out of 22,000 school children in summer activities, reducing the delinquency rate to the lowest point in years. Hard feelings in a small community were overcome by mutual agreement upon a community calendar, and a minister was instrumental in starting the idea. The young teen age boys of a crossroads town were won away from a gambling center by a minister who, with other citizens, provided for the boys a recreation center with clean associations.

So, in community after community, the church has taken the lead, and in nearly every case a minister has been a vital factor in giving a lead in community improvement. Here again, the minister teaches religion.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. —Matt. 23:37-38

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CHAPTER XII

THE MINISTER GROWS AS HE TEACHES RELIGION

YES, THE MINISTER teaches religion. He does so whether he wants to or not. He cannot help it. It makes a great deal of difference, however, whether he gains satisfaction as a result of his efforts or whether he feels a sense of worthlessness, or frustration. There is a difference in the kind of satisfaction that comes. When a man has a program and seeks to "put it over" in every new church and community to which he is called, or assigned, he feels some joy in the task. When he approaches his work from the standpoint of the *needs he finds,* and then builds a program *to meet those needs,* the satisfactions are very much greater. When he studies the needs, works for definite purposes based upon the needs he finds, and then sees persons grow from what they are to what he feels they should be, the returns are rich indeed.

Why is there such joy of soul when the minister works on the basis suggested in this book? Because:

1. He discovers that he has constructive purposes which propel all that he does. Those purposes are not *self*-determined. They are determined by what he finds in the people, in the church, in the community. They are determined by the all-compelling drive of the kingdom of God. He does not approach his task with a closed mind. Rather, he is open to redirection, if the need demands; he is open to suggestions, from whomever they may come—for he is endeavoring to accomplish goals based on need.

"I always had difficulty with my calling experiences," said a pastor, "until I realized that I should be sensitive to the needs of my parishioners. Thereafter, every call had a purpose—a dual purpose: to discover how I could help my parishioner and to find ways of doing so." That's it—calling becomes more than ringing doorbells; the luncheon club takes on new meaning; an official board meeting is not boring to leader or members but deals with vital issues of the people; going on a hike with a group of boys is not a chore but an opportunity to give guidance to the boys; sitting with a small group of teachers to help them with their teaching is not a hardship, but becomes the means of making religion real to many pupils. All of these experiences take on *new* meanings—meanings centered in personality and in the enrichment of life.

2. When he is meeting the needs of persons, the minister knows that his time and energies are spent on worth-while matters. Nothing is trivial where people are involved. No errand necessary to help persons is too humdrum to have his careful attention. Numbers no longer are his major consideration. He is interested in the welfare of individuals. His whole life and service become person-centered. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.)

3. He sees others grow as the result of his efforts. That is, evangelism takes place under his very eyes. Men and women, boys and girls, and youth are not only led to take the initial step to follow the Christ, but more. As a result of what he helps them to do, the minister witnesses in them a "growing in grace," a kinder and happier disposition, greater loyalty, and increased yearning for more of the "good life." These signs of growth may be so rapid as to cause a complete change of direction within a few days; or it may take months before growth is noticeable. When it comes, soon or late, it brings to

him who helped the growth take place one of the greatest thrills of his life. He rejoices in the fruits of his efforts. He is ready then to move on to the next steps to meet the added needs.

"Life never grows dull for me," says the minister who works on this basis. "Every moment is full of interest and value. I grow tired in body and need times of relaxation, but I never grow tired in spirit so long as I keep the welfare of others in mind, and make that my purpose." Thus, the minister is working with the growing processes of God, designed to bring a better world. God's own laws of growth work this way. God makes his greatest progress in a man's soul when the man feels the need for change or improvement. God makes progress by bringing to man's needs the resources of the world, physical and spiritual. Therefore, the minister lives with a sense of security in his task. Regardless of where he is called, or where he is sent, even though he might have wished for a better place to work, he feels no sense of frustration, for there are things to be done for and with God, for and with the people.

4. The minister who seeks to meet the needs of others has the release for his talents and abilities that he needs for his own development and growth. When one attempts to meet the wide variety of needs, and seeks to guide others in the program for meeting those needs, he must offer all the talents he may possess. In fact, it is nearer the truth to say that he will constantly have to "stretch himself" to provide all that is needed. Should the way seem blocked for the moment he is not frustrated. The apparent stalemate becomes for him another need to be met. He is, therefore, not discouraged. He is spurred on to new goals, and the challenge to complete the task in spite of temporary handicaps.

5. This procedure makes for "other-centeredness." "He who would find himself must lose himself." To meet the needs of people one must be concerned about them, in fact more con-

cerned about them than about his own selfish ends. This attitude always means that the person who has this concern grows more Christlike in his personality. It gives him a feeling of work well done and completed at each step of the way. Since persons can always grow further, his task is not to complete their experience. It is rather *to move them forward from where they are.* Upon leaving one field of service for another, which the minister seems sure to do sooner or later, he does not leave a situation which he has built around himself, the foundations of which may fall when he leaves. Rather he has helped persons to grow more capable of carrying on without him. The work can proceed under other leadership. The new leader finds persons who know how to fit into the church work.

6. Finally, he brings healing to his own soul because his life is spent in carrying the burdens of others. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He does what is needed regardless of the cost to him. The needs of others become his cross.

To give and give, and give again,
What God hath given thee,
To spend thy self nor count the cost,
To serve right gloriously
The God who gave all worlds that are,
And all that are to be.[1]

So, after all, this task of teaching religion is one that calls for one's best in example, faith, study, skill, and devotion. The returns to others and to oneself are treasures stored up in the lives of persons and in the world to come.

And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. —John 1:42*b*

[1] G. A. Studdert Kennedy.

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